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A Press in Paradise

The Beginnings of Printing in Micronesia

By JOHN ELIOT ALDEN

UPON the island of Ponape, on which our Navy was recently raining tons of bombs, a group of Americans nearly ninety years ago introduced a happier symbol of civilization by establishing the first printing press in Micronesia. To that region, as elsewhere, missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions brought not only Christianity but a devotion to the printed word as well, in which the bibliographer, whatever his faith or creed, may share.¹

With the opening of the second half of the nineteenth century the Board had turned its attention to the remoter reaches of the South Seas, having firmly grounded both the Gospel and the art of printing in the islands of Hawaii. That the word of Christ was needed to counterbalance the concept of American culture pro-

¹ This paper is based principally upon the Archive of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, recently deposited in the Harvard College Library. I am indebted to Dr. Enoch F. Bell, Librarian and Historian of the Board, for permission to make use of this material. My thanks are also due to Miss Bernice Judd, Librarian of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, in Honolulu; to Mr. Hugo Hespen, of The Library of Congress; and to Mr. Lewis M. Stark, of The New York Public Library, for the assistance which they have rendered me in preparing this paper.

vided by beachcombers and the captains and crews of Yankee whaling vessels is beyond question. Thus, in the summer of 1852, under the combined auspices of the American Board, whose headquarters were in Boston, and of the Hawaiian Missionary Society, a group of missionaries was sent out aboard the vessel *Caroline*, chartered for the trip. The first stations were set up at Kusaie, the easternmost of the Caroline Islands, and on Ponape, three hundred miles to the west, the finest of the same island group.²

The island of Ponape proved a most attractive field for his labors in the eyes of its first missionary, Luther Halsey Gulick, who described it in such glowing terms as these:

Ponape is a physical Paradise. Except on its Northern aspects, where the scattered islands & the bold hills are delightfully picturesque, there is nothing marked about the landscape, yet all is warm with a beauty most serene. Few sights are more fraught with magic romance than that of the coast from an inland elevation. The mainland shore steps freely, gracefully down to where Ocean ebbs & flows. Between the ever-green shore & the outer reef many a patch of coral whitens near the surface, tho' not protruding save at lowest tide, & attracts the eye to tracing out the winding channels & spreading bays of the deeper blue. Along the outer reef, the foaming line of white shows where hoary Ocean casts up as tributes of love many a deep-sea gem, & where he is ever surging out his admiration of Nature & his anthem to Nature's God.³

² Although the reader need only refer to his morning newspaper for the location of Ponape and of most of the islands mentioned in this paper, it may be well to outline the geography involved. The islands of Micronesia, along with those of Melanesia and Polynesia, lie to the east of the Philippines, New Guinea and Australia, south and west of the Hawaiian and Midway Islands. Micronesia comprises the Caroline, Marshall and Gilbert island groups, east of the Philippines. The Carolines, in turn, consist of a chain of scattered islands extending some 1800 miles from east to west, six hundred miles or more north of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Ponape itself is about three hundred miles from the eastern end of the chain. Geologically the island is of basaltic rather than of coral or volcanic origin, with several mountain peaks over two thousand feet in height. Ponape has a circumference of about sixty miles and includes not only the island of Ponape proper but numerous smaller islands connected with it structurally, all of which are contained within an encircling coral reef. In 1855, after the smallpox epidemic of the previous year, the native population of about five thousand was divided among five tribes which occupied different sections of the island.

³ L. H. Gulick, "Bonape or Ponape." ABCFM Archive: Micronesia, 1852-1859. Unless otherwise designated, subsequent references are to the original letters and documents found in the two bound volumes of manuscripts covering this period.

But not withstanding its physical beauty, Gulick was forced to add that "Ponape is a moral Sodom. Every prospect pleases, & only man is vile."

For the task of relieving the heathen darkness of the island no one could have been better qualified than Gulick. Born in 1828, the son of a missionary to the Hawaiian Islands, he had spent his early boyhood there prior to receiving his education in the United States. After graduating from the Medical College of the University of the City of New York—as New York University was then called—he was ordained to the ministry, and sent forth, accompanied by his wife, as a medical missionary to Micronesia.

Gulick, who is described as "the most distinguished member of a great missionary family," is probably best remembered for the accomplishments of his later years when he represented the American Bible Society in the Orient. There he founded the Bible House in Yokohama, and enormously increased the circulation of Bibles in China. Yet these activities had already been impressively foreshadowed by the earliest years of his missionary service when he exhibited the same faith in the power of the printed word.⁴

In his very first letter after his arrival on Ponape to the Secretary of the American Board, Rufus Anderson, Gulick closed with the statement, "I wish to mention the need that we shall soon be under of a printing-press," adding that a Hawaiian printer might be sent out from the Islands to supervise it.⁵

It was not until some four years later, in 1856, that a press became an actuality instead of just a need. Even had one been available it is doubtful whether or not it would have been possible to engage in printing. To begin with, a knowledge of the language had to be acquired. The natives had to be proselytized. Warfare between the various tribes broke out sporadically. During the year

⁴ The principal facts of Gulick's life are given in the *Dictionary of American Biography*. There is also a full-length biography of her father by Frances Gulick Jewett, published in Boston in 1895.

⁵ Gulick to Rufus Anderson, Ponape, 5 Aug.-25 Sept. 1852.

1854 an epidemic of smallpox, brought by a visiting ship, occupied Gulick's full energies as a physician. In addition, differences of opinion had to be settled regarding the system of orthography to be employed in transcribing the native languages, since the members of the mission stations favored varying forms.

While such obstacles were being overcome, however, it was found that the Hawaiian mission possessed a small hand press which was not needed and could be dispatched to Gulick.⁶ In the meantime he and his wife were forced to rely upon expedients for the school which they conducted for the natives, teaching them to read and write their own language. Shortly before the arrival of the press Gulick observed:

All our books are as yet prepared with our pens, for we have no printing press. Many of them are becoming well thumb worn, & when printed primers take their places we shall preserve them as interesting mementos of the first totterings of Micronesian literature.⁷

Early in 1856 Albert A. Sturges, who with his wife had joined the Gulicks on Ponape, was able to write that the long-awaited press had been received, and that they would soon put it to use.⁸ With not unseemly pride Gulick the following November reported the first printing in Micronesia:

You will be as pleased to hear as we are to tell, that we have commenced printing in the Ponape Dialect. I send you a specimen of the first printing ever performed on this island, bearing date Oct 1856. Though no immediate results may take place, it is the opening of a new era for the island, & for Micronesia. To Mr. Sturges is all the credit of it. Without the slightest practical knowledge of the art he has accomplished what you see & will yet perform much more. You will the more marvel when you hear that every r & most of the j s are from type of his own manufacture! The font sent us from the Sand[wich] Is[lands] most unfortunately only contains such letters as are used in the Hawaiian dialect.⁹

⁶ E. W. Clark to Anderson, North Pacific Ocean, 4 Nov. 1852 (Postscript: [Honolulu?] 4 December).

⁷ *Annual Report of the Ascension I. Mission* for 1855 (Ms.).

⁸ A. A. Sturges to Anderson, Ronkiti [Ponape], 9 Feb. 1856.

⁹ Gulick to Anderson, Ponape, 10 Nov. 1856.

A Specimen of The First Printing in The Ponape Dialect

KAPAKAP EN JICUC.

The Lord's Prayer - Translated by Rev. R. Sturges

Jam ai, me kutakut nalug,
 Mar umui me jeraui.
 Kua kuta to ki pena jap karoj.
 Umui majan en viauua palug tue
 a uiaa nalug.
 At kijen magi men ran en ran kum
 ki to ranuet.
 Kum kut en kapog kin kit, tue kit kin
 kapog ki at muejuit.
 Katera kurian kin kit juit;
 En tero jug kit juit.
 Pue jap umui karoj, o lamuia, oka-
 lagen, me uarai. Amen.

A Hymn by L. H. Gulick

- 1 I mauki la Jisus Kraist:
 I me Jer. me Katapin,
 Me kin kameraini kit,
 Me kin ki jung rutarut.
- 2 I mauki la Jisus Krust:
 Pil me maur mimi r'a:
 Men kanim pil aramaj;
 In jola men nim pil mur
- 3 I mauki la Jisus Kraist,
 Ma kin pataki uag kit,
 Lamilam me kajalel,
 Kapakap a mealel.

 I men mela I men nga,
 Ri ai Jam ai Ani mau:
 I men pira we jung met,
 Pue I mauki la Jisus Kraist

THE FIRST PRINTING IN MICRONESIA

From the copy in The Harvard College Library

The manuscript notes are in the autograph of Luther Halsey Gulick. The "r"s manufactured by Sturges will be readily recognized. The actual measurements of the broadside are ten by four inches.

While the publication in question, translations into Ponape of the Lord's Prayer and of a hymn, is perhaps scarcely worthy of comparison as a landmark in the history of printing with the Freeman's Oath, unlike the latter it has at least been preserved in the copy here reproduced.¹⁰

It is evident that though Gulick was responsible for the establishment of the press it was first set up at the station of Ronkiti, on the southwest coast of the island. There Sturges did the best he could with the materials available to him, exercising ingenuity and resourcefulness in overcoming myriad difficulties. Only on occasion did he complain, as when he wrote, "To get this much we have been obliged to make every shift; to make our r, & j; also manufacture spaces from wood! If we had materials enough to set up eight pages we could get on well; but this thing of doing on so small a scale is too tedious for us."¹¹ At the meeting of the Micronesia mission in 1857, when, on the annual visit of the missionary packet, the *Morning Star*, the various members of the scattered stations came together, Sturges was directed to draw up a memorandum to the Board in Boston, urging the desirability of a central printing establishment, with adequate equipment, for Micronesia.

Sturges made the most, to be sure, of the Hawaiian press. In January, 1857, Gulick, whose own station was at Shalong, a small island in Metalanim Harbor, on the east coast of Ponape, visited Sturges at Ronkiti, and here, about the middle of the month, by their united efforts they produced four small pages of a Ponape primer [No. 2], all that the quantity of type in their possession would permit.¹² Notwithstanding such handicaps Gulick in July could report progress. "We have thus far this year printed about 7000 pages in Ponape. It was on the 16th of January that we com-

¹⁰ For bibliographical descriptions of this and the other Ponape imprints under discussion, cited by numbers in brackets in the text, see the conclusion of this paper.

¹¹ Sturges to Anderson, Ponape, 19 Jan. 1857.

¹² Gulick, *Journal* . . . 18 Jan. [1857] (Ms.).

menced printing. In May, we struck off four Ponape Hymns [No. 5], that are being read by our pupils & also sung, for it is a part of our labors at present to teach singing. Some already sing Mr. Sturges' translation of 'There is a happy land,' in accents that are to us, at least, very sweet."¹³ By September the number of pages printed had risen to eight thousand, and the primer, the printing of which had been begun in January with a fragment of two leaves, had grown into a work of thirty-two pages [No. 6].¹⁴

While, due in part to the length of time required for communication, the requests addressed to the American Board for additional equipment for the press had not produced effective results, the Hawaiian Missionary Society came to the further assistance of the mission. On its voyage to Micronesia in the late summer of 1857 the *Morning Star* brought a Hawaiian printer, Simeon Kana-kaole.¹⁵ It is probable that additional supplies of type were sent out to Ponape at the same time. During the meeting of the mission in September it was decided that Kanakaole should settle at Shalong with Gulick, and the press was presumably transferred there from the Ronkiti station.¹⁶

One wonders if ever a press were set up amid more luxuriant natural surroundings. Gulick's residence on the island of Shalong stood on a height a hundred feet above the ocean, from which the ground sloped gradually down to the shore. From the dwelling there was an "indescribably beautiful" view of the land-locked harbor of Metalanim and of the islands on the barrier reef as well as of the open sea itself. Cocoanut palms, guava and tamarind

¹³ Gulick to Anderson, Ponape, 1 July, 1857.

¹⁴ Gulick to S. C. Damon, Ponape, Sept. 1857; published in *The Friend*, Honolulu, March, 1858.

¹⁵ Capt. S. G. Moore to Anderson, On board the *Morning Star*, 12 Aug. 1857. The Hawaiian's name appears here as "Hanakaoli," but his full name is more authoritatively given in the colophon of Gulick's *Kosoi Sarau'i Potapot*, 1858, which he printed.

¹⁶ *Minutes of the Second General Meeting of the Micronesia Mission* [in 1857] (Ms.).

trees grew about, in which parakeets and numerous other birds made their nests. Chinese geraniums, hibiscus, damask roses and mimosa mingled with less exotic flowers such as bachelor's buttons, periwinkle and four o'clocks. "So exquisitely beautiful is the picture seen from Shalong, that it does not require much imagination to fancy yourself in a land of pure delight; and such rare combinations of ocean and mountain scenery, of beauty and utility, can no where be found but in the tropics."¹⁷

Certainly never did the products of a press in their austerity provide such a contrast with the lushness of the surroundings amid which they were printed.

With the arrival of a trained craftsman the press was at last able to justify Gulick's hopes for its fruitfulness. In October, 1857, Sturges wrote that "A small press & native printer are already beginning to assist us in our diffuse work."¹⁸ The following year saw Kanakaole extremely active. At its meeting the previous autumn the mission had decided to follow the general practice of the American Board in employing Lepsius's *Standard Alphabet* for the transcription of native languages, so that Gulick, who had hitherto followed the Hawaiian system, undertook the revision of the primer and of the hymns previously issued, printing new editions of both [Nos. 8 & 12]. A still more ambitious project was the publication of a fifty-five page volume of Old Testament narratives [No. 9]. Commenting on it, Gulick remarked, "My book is far from perfect, even in the spelling, as I am already able to see, but it is sufficiently near it to form a very readable book, and I have learned more of the language in pre-

¹⁷ T. W. Gulick, "Appendix," *Eighth Annual Report of the [Hawaiian] Mission Children's Society*, Honolulu, 1860, pp. 23-25.

¹⁸ Sturges to Anderson, Ascension Island [i.e., Ponape], 14 Oct. 1857. Kanakaole's abilities seem to have included more than just a knowledge of printing, for the statement is made that "Some of the people of Tolapail [a village on Ponape] have so far learned to sing, under Kanakaole's instruction, as to take their hymn books to church and join with their teachers in a manner truly grateful to their hearts." S. E. Hall, *Report of the Corresponding Secretary*, in: *Seventh Annual Report of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society*, Honolulu, 1859, p. 6.

paring it, than I could have done in any other way. This is one of the great advantages of early, in the history of a mission, commencing schools and printing in the vernacular, by which the teacher learns much more than he imparts."¹⁹

Only the fact that the printing of this volume exhausted the supply of paper at hand prevented Gulick from accomplishing more.²⁰ But with the coming of the *Morning Star* in August there apparently arrived a fresh stock which permitted the printing of a broadside primer in the Gilbertese language for Hiram Bingham, Jr., stationed on Apaiang, a neighboring island to better-known Tarawa [No. 14].²¹ At about the same time a primer was likewise printed for the Ebon station, the first to be done in the language of the Marshall Islands [No. 13].²² The cuts with which it is illustrated—wood-engravings of domestic animals—had probably just arrived aboard the *Morning Star*.

When the time came for the vessel to sail for Honolulu in early October, Kanakaole—who seems to have found the separation from his wife, whom he had left behind in Hawaii, too great a privation—decided to return there, despite the urgent requests of the mission that he remain at Ponape.²³

Lacking a trained printer, Gulick none the less continued to publish, though on a somewhat reduced scale, and in the year 1859 there appeared several works of which we have record. How this was possible is seen in the preface of the edition of Mrs. Gulick's primer [No. 16], where she says, "As a matter of interest in itself, and to account for defects in the mechanical execution of

¹⁹ L. H. Gulick, cited by Hall, as above, pp. 6-7.

²⁰ Gulick to Anderson, Shalong, Ponape, 25 July 1858. In this letter Gulick gives the number of pages printed since the beginning of the year as 9,700.

²¹ Hiram Bingham, Jr., to Anderson, Strong's Island [i.e., Kusaie], 21 Sept. 1858.

²² George Pierson to Anderson, Strong's Island, 4 Oct. [-15 Dec.] 1858.

²³ *Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Micronesia Mission*. August, 1858 (Ms.). Captain Brown of the *Morning Star* speaks of Kanakaole's passage aboard the vessel at this time, when he served with the crew.

my primer, let me say that I have been assisted in setting it up, almost entirely by unpracticed native girls from a very defective font," adding that the expense of the volume had been borne by Dr. Gulick's brother Theodore, who also acted as pressman for the work. The irregularities in the numbering of the pages are a notable example of the defects to which Mrs. Gulick refers.

A book of New Testament narratives [No. 15], a continuation of that based on the Old Testament issued the previous year, was similarly printed, as well as the first eight chapters of the Gospel of Matthew [No. 18]. Perhaps the most curious of the publications of this period is a four-page tract addressed by Gulick "To My Personal Friends, and to the Friends of Virtue" [No. 17], which deals with the conduct of the crews of American whaling vessels in the South Pacific.

The morals of sailors long at sea being what they are, it is not surprising that the missionaries of Micronesia found themselves scandalized that the precepts they taught were so flagrantly violated by the crews of American whalers touching at the islands on which they were stationed. From the testimony of Melville and of others there can be little doubt that the missionaries had cause for dismay. It was probably as much in his rôle of physician as of missionary that Gulick attempted to call to the attention of the public at home the behavior of American seamen abroad. A letter of Gulick's to "Christian Owners of Whale Ships" had been widely published in the States in 1857, describing the private and public immorality of most of the seamen visiting Micronesia. In the ensuing controversy Gulick was attacked for revealing what the comfortable families of seafaring New England probably preferred not to know. In an effort to substantiate further his assertions Gulick wrote a second letter, and, finding that even the friendly editor of a Honolulu paper felt that "the less said on this subject the better," he himself published it with additional documentation, naming vessels and their captains. The resultant

pamphlet provides an interesting item for the maritime history of the United States in the nineteenth century.

Thanks to Gulick's ability and devotion the station at Shalong had by this time been firmly established. He had, as a result, become anxious to try a new sphere of activity, casting his eyes towards the unexplored regions of the Gilbert Islands. But in 1859, due to the failure of Mrs. Pierson's health, it was necessary for Mr. and Mrs. Pierson, whose primer Gulick had printed the year before, to leave the island of Ebon, in the Marshall group, and return to the United States. As a consequence it was decided to transfer Gulick to Ebon.

Thus, during the visit of the *Morning Star* in the fall of the same year, Gulick left Shalong. But in moving he took with him to Ebon the press which he had used on Ponape. With the removal of the press the first chapter in the history of printing in Micronesia comes to a close, although another opens. For just as the press had been the earliest in the Caroline Islands, so, in turn, as the result of Gulick's efforts, it became the first in the Marshall Islands.

It is as a symbol rather than for the inherent importance of its product that the press on Ponape is significant, extending beyond the mere fact that it was the first in Micronesia. The hymns and primers were the expression of a conviction of the value of the printed word, not simply as a medium for recording the news of the moment or the phases of the moon, but as a means for achieving a finer way of life and of bringing it to others. The same flame of religious faith which brought the first press to North America carried printing to the South Seas. That he was responsible for this is not the least of the many accomplishments of Luther Halsey Gulick.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE MICRONESIA MISSION OF THE
AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONS PRINTED ON THE
ISLAND OF PONAPE, 1856-1859.

The following list comprises those works of which copies are known or to which reference is found in the correspondence in the Archive of the American Board. Titles the numbers of which have been placed in brackets have not been located. So far as ascertainable, the listing is chronological.

1856

1. BIBLE. N. T. MATTHEW VI, 9-13. PONAPE. 1856. STURGES. Kapakak en Jicuc. [Ponape, 1856]
Broadside on blue writing paper. 10 x 4 inches. Printed October, 1856. Comprises the Lord's Prayer (Matthew VI, verses 9-13), translated into Ponape by A. A. Sturges, and a hymn, without title, by L. H. Gulick. See reproduction in text.
Copy: HCL (ABCFM).

1857

2. [GULICK, LOUISA (LEWIS), *b.* 183⁰]. Uara en Turapa. [Ponape, 1857] [4] p. 5⁷/₈ x 4³/₄ inches. Caption title. Printed 16 January 1857.
"Mrs. Sturges' & Gulick's primer."—L. H. Gulick to Rufus Anderson, [Ponape], 10 April 1857. Cf. No. 6 below.
Copy: HCL (ABCFM).
3. [GULICK, LOUISA (LEWIS)]. [Ponape primer. Ponape, 1857]
Pp. [5-8]. 5⁷/₈ x 4³/₄ inches. Issued without title. Apparently printed between January sixteenth and April tenth, at a later occasion than no. 2 above, of which it forms a continuation. Cf. also No. 6 below.
Copy: HCL (ABCFM).
4. [WATTS, ISAAC, 1674-1748]. Puk en Peituk. [Ponape, 1857] [4] p. 5⁷/₈ x 4³/₄ inches. Caption title. Cf. No. 6 below.
Presumably a translation of the first of Watts's *Four Catechisms for Children*, published by the American Tract Society.
Copy: HCL (ABCFM).
- [5]. [FOUR HYMNS IN PONAPE]
"In May, we struck off four Ponape hymns."—Gulick to Anderson, Ponape, 1 July 1857. Cf. No. 6 below.

- [6]. [GULICK, LOUISA (LEWIS). First lessons and hymns in Ponape]
[32p.]

"Since the first of January we have printed thirty-two small pages of 'First Lessons and Hymns' in Ponapean."—Gulick to [S.C.] Damon, September 1857, published in *The Friend*, Honolulu, March, 1858.

7. BIBLE. N. T. MATTHEW I-II. PONAPE. 1857. GULICK. Ipansel me Matu Intiniata. [Ponape, 1857]

3 p. 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Caption title.

A translation of Chapters I-II only of the Gospel of Matthew. Cf. No. 18 below.

Copy: HCL (ABCFM).

1858

8. [GULICK, LOUISA (LEWIS)]. Puk en Watowatok Lokaia en Ponape. Salon, Metalanim, Ponape, Mars, 1858.

12p. 7 x 5 inches. Caption title.

"I . . . reprinted a revised edition of our first lessons conforming as nearly as our types will allow to Lepsius' Standard Alphabet."—Gulick to Anderson, Ponape, 25 July 1858. Cf. No. 6 above.

Copy: Hawaiian Evangelical Association, Honolulu; HCL.

9. [GULICK, LUTHER HALSEY, 1828-1891]. Kosoi Saraui Potapot Akai men Katitikion Kit en Kot a Kot en Wiawia Kailanaio Koto. Puk I. Kosoi en Moa en Krai me Mi er nan Puk uet. Misineri en Meriki me Intin o Kaparapar Kisenlikau uet. Salon, Ponape, 1858.

1 prelim. leaf, 55, [1] p. 7 x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Colophon: Simeon Kanakaole, Me wiata Puk uet. Ponape, Sun 30, 1858.

Narratives from the Old Testament. It is possible that copies without a title-page represent an earlier issue, the title-page being added only after the publication in the following year of the narratives from the New Testament. Cf. No. 15 below.

Copies: T. W. Streeter Collection; NYPL (without title-page); Cleveland Public Library; Yale (without title-page); Hawaiian Evangelical Association.

- [10]. [GULICK, LUTHER HALSEY. Almanac tables]
[Broadside?]

"I have also prepared & had printed a few Almanac Tables."—Gulick to Anderson, Ponape, 25 July 1858.

- [11]. [GULICK, LUTHER HALSEY. A leaf of figures]
[Broadside?]

"I have also prepared & had printed . . . a leaf of figures."—Gulick to Anderson, Ponape, 25 July 1858.

12. KAUL SARAUI KAI MEN KAKAULETAON SEOPA ATAIL SOPETI LAPALAP NALON. Misineri en Meriki Kai me Intin o Kaparapar Kisenlikau uet. Salon, Ponape, Sulai, 1858.

1 prelim. leaf, 12p. $5\frac{3}{4} \times 4$ inches.

"We have composed & printed several new hymns, & have reprinted the old ones uniformly with the new, thus making a little book of 17 pages."—Gulick to Anderson, Ponape, 25 July 1858. Despite the seeming discrepancy in the number of pages, this is probably the work to which Gulick refers. A new edition of a portion of No. 6 above.

Copy: Hawaiian Evangelical Association.

13. [PIERSON, NANCY ANNETTE (SHAW), *b.* 1828]. [Ebon Island Primer. Ponape, 1858]

Signatures [1]-3². 12p. Illustrations. $7\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

"By Mrs. N. A. Pierson."—Ms. note, HCL copy.

Copy: HCL (ABCFM).

According to the *Historical Catalogue* of the British and Foreign Bible Society, London, 1903-11, Vol. II, p. 334, George Pierson and E. T. Doane of the Ebon Station, in the Marshall Islands, printed a tentative translation of Chapters V-XI of the Gospel of Matthew in 1858. If so, it would probably have been printed at Ponape. But I find no other evidence of its publication. On the contrary, in a journal letter from Pierson to Rufus Anderson, under the date of 15 December 1858, he writes, "I forgot to say that we have had a primer in this language printed this fall at Ponape. It has twelve pages, & is the first printing in this language." However forgetful Mr. Pierson may have been, it is not likely that he would have failed to mention such a version of Matthew at this time.

14. [BINGHAM, MINERVA CLARISSA (BREWSTER), *b.* 1834]. [Gilbert Islands Primer. Ponape, 1858]

Broadside. $9\frac{5}{8} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Issued without title.

"Kingsmill [i.e., Gilbert Islands] Primer, printed at Ponape, Sept. 1858."—Ms. note, HCL copy.

"We have prepared a *brief* primer, the printing of a few copies of which Dr. Gulick has kindly offered to superintend while the vessel [the *Morning Star*] may remain at that island."—Hiram Bingham, Jr., to Anderson, Strong's Island [i.e., Kusaie], 21 September 1858.

Copy: HCL (ABCFM).

1859

15. [GULICK, LUTHER HALSEY]. Kojoi Jeraui Kai. [Ponape, 1859]
40p. 7 x 4½ inches. Caption title; issued without title-page.
Narratives from the New Testament, a sequel to No. 9 above.
The Hawaiian Evangelical Association copy is interleaved with blank pages containing notes presumably in the autograph of Gulick. A title-page in manuscript is also inserted which reads "Kojoi Jeraui Potapot Akai men Katitikion en Kot a Kot en Wiawia Kailanaio Koto Puk II." In one of the notes Gulick speaks of the work as follows: "The first twenty chapters I have intended should be tolerably close translations of scripture verses. The last ten chapters are in no respect literal translations."
Copies: NYPL; Yale; Hawaiian Evangelical Association.
16. [GULICK, LOUISA (LEWIS)]. Puk Monai eu men Watapon. [Ponape, 1859]
4, 20 [i.e., 23] p. Illustrations. 7½ x 5 inches. Caption title, from first page of text. Pagination irregular: 4, 2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-6, 6-13, 7-8, 14-20.
Dedication, in English, of four pages, "My Dear Sisters Of The Micronesian Mission," dated July, 1859, and signed L. L. Gulick, precedes text. A new edition of No. 8 above.
Copies: NYPL; Hawaiian Evangelical Association; HCL.
17. [GULICK, LUTHER HALSEY]. . . . To My Personal Friends, And to the Friends of Virtue;—. [Ponape, 1859]
[4] p. 8¼ x 5¼ inches. Caption title. At head of title: Ascension I. Pacific Ocean. Aug, 1859. Printed on ruled gray writing paper.
Includes also a letter from Gulick's brother Theodore.
Copy: HCL (ABCFM).
18. BIBLE. N. T. MATTHEW I-VIII. PONAPE. 1859. GULICK. Ipanjel me Matu Intinieti. [Ponape, 1859]
20p. 7⅛ x 4½ inches. Caption title; issued without title-page.
A translation of Chapters I-VIII only of the Gospel of Matthew. Cf. No. 7.
Copies: NYPL; Yale.

The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table: A Bibliographical Study

By THOMAS FRANKLIN CURRIER

TO the American reading public, seventy-five years ago, the name Oliver Wendell Holmes and the word "Autocrat" were interchangeable, and brought to mind instantly none other than the genial, little doctor who daily lectured to students at the Harvard Medical School on the mysteries of the human frame, or, almost daily, enlivened after-dinner programs on public occasions with merry and appropriate verses. The essays which had bestowed on the doctor the title "Autocrat" had appeared in the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly* during its first year of existence, and had then been published as a volume that became the day's "best-seller." Today, for one wishing to recapture the flavor of old days in New England, few books compare with *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*. That the volume is still distributed in low-priced series of "classics" proves that it continues to retain some fragment at least of its former popularity, and as recently as August, 1944, a writer in *Publishers' Weekly*, under the caption, *The Values we are Bent on Preserving*, reported that *The Autocrat* is among the books now currently circulated in our armed forces abroad.

It is true of this book, as of many volumes which, immediately after publication, sprang into public favor, that the collector and the bibliographer, when examining early issues, discover numerous variations in typography and make-up, due to the rapid succession of printings in the first weeks of issue, for the ink of one printing was scarcely dry before the next impression was in prog-

ress. In fact, the impressions of the first three forms of issue of the duodecimo edition of 1858, with which we are largely concerned in the present study, were all produced between November 12 and December 7 of that year, and twenty thousand copies were reported to have been sold within three weeks after first publication. The object of the present paper is to give an account of the early printings of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, and throw light on some disputed points concerning them. It is offered to this Society in the hopes of eliciting new information, and to invite correction of errors of fact or judgment it may contain before its inclusion, in greatly summarized form, in a bibliography of all the writings of Holmes which the present writer is now bringing to conclusion. Of the published books of Holmes this is the one that most needs final bibliographical analysis. The characteristics and chronology of the first issues have been described by Richard Curle, in 1930, in his *Collecting American First Editions*; by John T. Winterich, in the *Publishers' Weekly*, New York, January 17, 1931; and again by the same writer, in 1938, in his *23 Books*. Taking, as a point of departure, these descriptions, the whole ground has been resurveyed in detail, numerous copies examined, their significant points tabulated, and research made in the archives of the Riverside Press, Cambridge.

Before plunging into details it is wise to state explicitly the nature of the information which it is hoped the present paper will call forth from those who may read it. Such information will be gratefully received and should be addressed to the writer at 19 West Street, Belmont 78, Massachusetts.

1. Location of all copies with the five-ring spine.
2. Location of copies with the title-page date 1858, without circles on the spine.
3. Location of copies with the title-page date 1858 and bound otherwise than in the regular tan cloth.
4. Location of copies with the title-page date 1858 and with

double imprint, e.g. Boston-Cincinnati, Boston-London, London-Boston.

5. Location of copies presented by Holmes to friends, especially to his Harvard classmates, a list of these being printed at page 340 of the Cambridge edition of his poems.

6. Location of copies with any dated inscription on the fly-leaves and with the title-page date 1858; also such copies of the large-paper edition of 1859.

7. Data revealing the chronological order of, or reason for, the two forms of issue of the large-paper edition, namely with and without illustrations.

8. Information as to any dissatisfaction expressed with Hoppin's illustrations, and if so, by whom and why.

The present survey begins with a formal bibliographical description of the normal copy of the first issue and a tabulated reference list of the early issues with their distinguishing points. A note on the Hoppin illustrations follows, and then come, in succession, brief descriptions of the characteristic points to which reference is made later. A study of the chronology of the issues follows, based on typographical features, bindings, and other available data, and the paper closes with paragraphs on the large-paper issues, the celebrated copyright case, and a brief statement regarding the number of impressions and copies printed from the first set of plates. It may seem to the reader that by this order of treatment conclusions are expressed before they have been proved, but the plan will prove simplest because of the many small and inter-related points, discussed from various standpoints, and needing some sort of description at the start.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE. Every Man his own Boswell. Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company. M DCCC LVIII.

The author's name is not on the title-page, but is included on the spine. En-

tered for copyright November 2, 1858, and copies deposited November 22; but note the paragraph on the copyright, near the close of this paper. The book was announced in the *Boston Evening Transcript* of November 12, 1858, as "this day published." A copy in the Medical History Library of Yale University bears the fly-leaf date November 13. The duodecimo edition was priced at one dollar, and the large-paper issue at \$2.25 in cloth, \$4.50 in full calf or Turkey.

Collation: viii, 373 pages, and nine inserted woodcuts, described below. Comprises a preliminary gathering of four leaves, the first leaf blank, in which are inserted a woodcut title-page and the main title-page, the latter printed in red and black; then follow sig. [1] - 15 in 12's, and 16 in 8, the final leaf blank. Page [i], half-title. [ii], blank. [iii], inserted title-page, in red and black, following the inserted, woodcut title-page, which is not included in the pagination. [iv], copyright notice, 1858, by Oliver Wendell Holmes, in the District Court of the District of Massachusetts; and printers' note: Riverside, Cambridge: Stereotyped and printed by H. O. Houghton and Company. [v]-viii, *The Autocrat's Autobiography*, signed at the end: Oliver Wendell Holmes. Boston Nov. 1st 1858. [1]-364, text. [365]-373, index. [374], blank. The red and black title-page has the words "The Autocrat" and "Breakfast-Table" in red, as is the name of the publishers; the rest is in black. The dimensions of the leaf are $7\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Issues

The table presented herewith summarizes the characteristic points of the early issues, as finally determined by the present study. It is inserted here, at the beginning, for quick reference, and to make clear the explanations which follow. Each point mentioned will be described in detail later in the paper. The phrase "form of issue" is used because, with the information as yet available, it is not possible to determine the actual number of impressions put on the market before the plates were purchased at auction by Ticknor and Fields, in November, 1859, as reported in the *American Publishers' Circular* for November 26, 1859 (volume 5, p. 581), and in the *American Literary Gazette*, August 15, 1871 (volume 17, p. 230).

First form of issue, 1858. Woodcut title-page present; blank leaf after the index, conjugate to pages 361/362; early form of end-papers, described below; four-ring spine; period present after the word "Company," on the red and black title-page; imperfect letter *w* in the word *way*, the first word of the last line, page 342; obscured type on page 161; inserted illustrations.

First form of issue, 1858-variants:

1. Copies with five-ring spine.
2. Copies with Boston-Cincinnati imprint.
3. Copies with Boston-London imprint.
4. Copies with perfect *w* in *way* on page 342.

Second form of issue, 1858: Woodcut title-page omitted; advertisements on the leaf following the index; late form of end-papers; four-ring spine; no period after "Company," on the title-page; perfect *w* in the word *way*, last line of page 342; obscured type on page 161; inserted illustrations.

Second form of issue, 1858-variant: Copies with the London-Boston imprint.

Third form of issue, 1858: Without woodcut title-page; advertisements on the leaf following the index; plain blue (usually) end-papers; no rings on the spine; no period after "Company," on the title-page; perfect *w* in the word *way*, last line of page 342; perfect type on page 161; inserted illustrations.

Large-paper issues, 1859-a: Without illustrations; "Boston" at the foot of the spine.

Large-paper issue, 1859-b: With illustrations; "Boston" at the foot of the spine.

Large-paper issue, 1859-c (variant): With illustrations; "Ticknor & Co." at the foot of the spine.

Duodecimo, 1859: Inserted illustrations.

First Ticknor and Fields issue, 1860: Duodecimo; inserted illustrations.

As explained elsewhere in this paper, the first issue of *The Autocrat* was published November 12, 1858; the second form of issue was available less than a week later; the large-paper copies were ready before December 18, but this issue was probably not on sale until shortly before Christmas, 1858; finally the third form of issue with the title-page date 1858 was probably put out about the time that the large-paper issue was out, possibly a bit earlier.

Illustrations

The *American Publishers' Circular* of October 16, 1858, page 498, reports as follows: "We have seen some capital illustrations by Hoppin of scenes in Holmes's incomparable 'Autocrat of the Breakfast Table' . . . Hoppin in his drawings has done justice to the humor and pathos of the author." The *Atlantic Monthly* for

December, 1858, volume 2, p.900, issued about November 22, inserts the note, "The many admirers of the 'Autocrat' will learn with pleasure that a fine edition of his charming volume is in preparation, with tinted paper, illustrated by Hoppin, and bound in elegant style. Probably no holiday-book will be in such demand this season." Augustus Hoppin was, at this time, at the height of his reputation as a successful illustrator, but there is some mystery about his work for *The Autocrat*. Beginning with the issue of November 13, 1858, continuing for several days, and as late as the twenty-seventh, Phillips and Sampson inserted in the *Boston Evening Transcript* an advertisement of the duodecimo edition, "with illustrations by Hoppin"; on December 4 the large-paper issue is advertised in the same paper as in press, "tinted paper, bevelled boards, gilt edged," with not a word about the illustrations. Why is it that, in this advertisement and elsewhere in later advertisements, the illustrations are not mentioned? And why were they left out from what seem to have been the earlier copies distributed of the large-paper issue, as will be seen later in the paragraphs devoted to that issue, and yet appear in the later copies? Two letters from Hoppin to Holmes have reference to the illustrations but throw no light on our problem. The first letter, now in The Library of Congress, is dated Providence, July 27th 1858, and reads as follows:

My dear Sir,

I was exceedingly flattered this morning by the receipt of your most complimentary note; and this is not expressing to you the whole of my obligation, as nothing is more agreeable than an appreciation of one's works, and what you were pleased to write me concerning those little "remembrances of travel" is the more valuable from the fact that they were impromptu affairs and claimed no pretensions to artistic merit.

In regard to the "Autocrat," I most heartily concur with your own views thereon and I am entirely convinced that if ideas *illustrated* are not the embodiment of the ideas *written*, they only hinder the reader, & both ideas are weakened. The "Autocrat papers" are hardly *illustratable*. There are so many *shades* of ideas, so much that is merely suggested, that it is next to an impossibility to bring them into existence by the pencil. I therefore quite despair of doing any-thing successful in

relation to them. I told Mr. Wyman however that I should try again, for the simple *pleasure* of another trial, & I relied upon him to acquaint me frankly with your views of them, & if they did not embody to your perfect satisfaction what you intended to convey, I should insist upon their non-appearance. There is nothing more irritating than to have one's own idea given to the public by illustration in a light just the opposite from the one intended.

Please accept my thanks for your kind commendation of my drawing & believe me

Very truly yours

AUGUSTUS HOPPIN

The second letter, now in the Holmes collection, Harvard University Library, is dated Providence, 10th January, 1859:

My Dear Doctor

I return you many thanks for a beautiful copy of the "Autocrat" just received from Phillips, Sampson & Co. I shall value it exceedingly as well for the complimentary act of courtesy which prompted the gift, as also for the autograph which it contains.

Believe me my dear sir, (that although from circumstances over which I had no control, my portion of the work has only been an incubus upon it,) I still shall always feel happy for the lucky day which afforded me an opportunity of your acquaintance.

I am very sincerely yours

AUG^s. HOPPIN.

These letters reveal that Hoppin made at least two attempts at suitable illustrations; they hint at Holmes's dissatisfaction with the original attempt, but they do not explain the nature of the "incubus" which they declare they have placed on the book. To the present writer Hoppin's drawings, with one or two exceptions, appeal as most appropriate; his title-page, however, added little to the adornment of the book and was rejected in the second form of issue. The silhouette appearing thereon is said to represent Holmes, but it bears little resemblance either to him or to Hoppin, who might well have been pardoned for thus injecting himself into the scene as an onlooker.

The nine woodcuts contained are: the title-page, the Old Gentleman Opposite, the Landlady's Daughter, the Schoolmistress, the Young Fellow Called John, the Poor Relation, Our Benj. Franklin, the Port-Chuck, the Deacon.

Bindings

The bindings of the early issues are, in an overwhelming percentage of cases, a somewhat unattractive, pebbled, tan cloth. It must be admitted however, that they probably had a more respectable appearance when fresh from the bindery than they have to-day after almost ninety years of wear and tear. A few copies appear in other colors, which will be discussed in a later paragraph. The front and back covers are stamped, wholly in blind, with an ornamental frame at the borders, and a circle in the centre, within which is stamped: | Autocrat | P. S. & Co. | The spine is lettered in gilt: | Autocrat | of the | Breakfast | Table | ——— | Holmes |. Beneath the title and author's name on the spine are four rings, also in gilt, arranged in a vertical line, the upper three enclosing conventionalized fleurs-de-lys, the lowest the initials of the publishers. The edges are trimmed, and the end-papers are sewed in, being of yellow paper on which are printed advertisements, as described in a later paragraph. There are single fly-leaves at each end of the book, in addition to the free end-papers, and the first and last blank leaves of the first and last signatures. Variant bindings and their possible significance are described below.

FIVE-RING BINDING. The first and second forms of issue ordinarily have four rings on the spine as described in the previous paragraph. Rare copies have a fifth ring, placed above the title. All of the five-ring copies seen have the characteristics of the earliest issue, and, typographically, are perfect in the numerous cases where later issues show broken type. This will be discussed below, under *Typography*. The peculiarity of the five-ring spine does not, therefore, necessarily imply a different issue; it has been suggested that it was a trial binding. The writer has been able to tabulate only four such copies,¹ although the existence of others has

¹ Since this paper was presented, an additional copy has been examined, in the Chapin Library, Williams College. It agrees bibliographically with the other four, in all points—C. A. W.

been reported, some of them carefully stored away "for the duration" of the present war.

Other Points

END-PAPERS. The first and second forms of issue normally have sewed-in end-papers which contain advertisements of the publications of Phillips, Sampson and Company. In both forms the end-papers at the front advertise "Works of Permanent Value." The end-papers at the back differ in these two forms of issue. In the first form the free end-paper at the back lists "Poetry and the Drama," while its conjugate leaf, the paste-down, advertises "School Books." In the second form of issue both pages of the final end-papers are headed "Miscellaneous." The end-papers of the 1858 issue without the rings on the spine have no printing and are usually light blue in color, rarely, green.

WOODCUT TITLE-PAGE. Hoppin, who was engaged to illustrate the book, designed a title-page, described above, under *Illustrations*, which appears only in the first form of issue. It is a distinguishing mark of the first form, but it must be noted that, being an insert, it would be simple, as has apparently been done in at least one copy seen, for it to be placed in copies of the second form, having been removed, probably, from some unsaleable copy of the first issue.

FINAL LEAF. Copies of the first issue have a blank leaf following the index and conjugate to pages 361/362, being the eighth leaf of the final signature. The fact that this leaf is an integral part of the final signature should exempt it from the machinations of the faker. It will be noticed that, in a perfect copy, this final blank leaf is regularly followed by a blank fly-leaf, ordinarily of thinner paper. In the later forms of issue this leaf following the index contains an advertisement of "Valuable Books Published by Phillips, Sampson & Co."

PERIOD AFTER "COMPANY." The presence of a period after the word "Company," in the imprint of the red and black title-page,

is often said to be the mark of a first issue. It would be more accurate to say that its absence always denotes a later issue, its presence usually denotes a first.

“WAY” ON PAGE 342. In the first form of issue, except in rare cases, the initial *w* of the word *way*, at the beginning of the last line on page 342, is a broken letter, this being particularly true of the copies bound in tan cloth; in the later issues this letter is perfect. Reference is made to this point in the paragraphs, below, on typography and color of the bindings.

Presentation Copies and Fly-leaf Dates, 1858, 12mo.

Early copies of the duodecimo form with fly-leaf dates are none too numerous. Those seen are here listed for easy reference because of the bearing they have on the discussions which follow. All copies listed in this table are in the tan, cloth binding, except the Townsend copy (first form) in red, the McClean copy (third form) in olive green, and the copy of the third form given to the Boston Athenæum Library by Holmes which has been rebound. The copy given to his mother by Holmes, although not dated, is included because it is the only copy of the 1858 first form which has ever been reported as used by Holmes for presentation. It is probable that he was awaiting the arrival of the large-paper copies, still “in press” when the duodecimo was first issued.

12mo Copies with 1858 Fly-leaf Date

First form of issue, five-ring spine:

No dated copies reported.

First form of issue, four-ring spine:

No date. Gift of Holmes to his mother (Harvard Library).

November 13. W. H. Vincent copy (Yale Medical History Library).

November 17. H. C. Townsend copy (Mr. Carroll A. Wilson).

Hybrid copy:

November 19. Lucie A. Noyes copy (Wilson).

Second form of issue, four rings:

November 24. J. A. Amory copy (Goodspeed's).

December 12. Stephen Salisbury copy (American Antiquarian Society).

Third form of issue, no rings:

December 7. Gift of Holmes to the Boston Athenæum.

December 25. F. J. Nash copy (Boston Medical Library).

December 25. Maggie P. McClean copy (Wilson).

Typography

Curle has stressed (loc. cit. pages 9 and 10) the value of a study of type imperfections in discussing the order of printing of the different issues of *The Autocrat*. To support and amplify his statements over fifty copies have been examined and the results tabulated, below, of nineteen significant points selected for comparison. It should be kept in mind that what we are naming the first two forms of issue must, in reality, comprise a greater number of impressions and issues. In this table the issues are arranged in order of priority as determined by our investigation.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1858, 1a-5 rings	i	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	i	c	i	i	i
1858, 1b-4 rings	i	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	i	c	i	i	i
1858, 1c-4 rings	c	ci	ci	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	i	c	i	i	i
1858, 2 -4 rings	c	i	i	i	i	i	ci	ci	ci	c	c	c	c	c	i	c	i	i	i
1858, 3 -no rings	c	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	c	c	i	i	i
1859-large paper	c	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	c	c	i	i	i
1859-duodecimo	c	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	c	ci	i	i	i
1860-duodecimo	c	i	i	-	c	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	i	c	i	c	i	i

Note. The letter *c* indicates perfect type or correct text, as the case may be, at the point in question; the letter *i* indicates imperfect type or incorrect text. The columns of the table are divided, vertically, into groups, items within a single group being alike, in that the changes indicated for that group belong, chronologically, to one and the same period. The order of the groups of columns in respect to each other is that of priority of change, the first column embracing the earliest changes, in point of time, the last columns the latest changes or continued imperfections. The horizontal lines do not represent the individual copies, but state the normal characteristics of the form of issue designated at the left of the table.

Key to the numbers over the columns:

1. Page 342, last line, *w* in the word *way*.
2. " 313, line 13, *n* in *hand*.
3. " 321, last line, *i* in *in*.
4. Title-page, period after the word "Company" in the imprint.

5. Page 51, the 5 in the page-number.
6. " 95, last line, dash at the beginning of the line.
7. " 113, the 3 in the page-number.
8. " 171, second line from the foot, *o* in *one*.
9. " 185, second line from the foot, *d* in *don't*.
10. " 3, head-line with broken type.
11. " 149, the 9 in the page-number.
12. " 171, last line, *a* in *asleep*.
13. " 189, the 9 in the page-number.
14. " 261, last line, *f* in *friend*.
15. " 161, obscured type at lines 19, 20, 21.
16. " 89, the 9 in the page-number.
17. " 301, third line from the foot, last word, *and* for *any*.
18. " 309, line 19, *huug* for *hung*.
19. " 313, line 13, *d* in *hand*.

In this table the first form of issue is designated "1858,1" and includes normal copies, having, as already explained, the last end-paper advertising school-books, and the last leaf of the final signature blank; "1858,2" designates the second form of issue, with the last end-paper headed "Miscellaneous," and with advertising matter on the last leaf of the final signature; "1858,3" indicates copies with the plain end-papers and without rings on the spine. For convenience in the discussion the first form of issue has here been split into three classes, namely: 1858,1a, copies of the first form with five-ring spine; 1858,1b, copies of the first form with the four-ring spine, and an imperfect letter *w* in the word *way* (column 1 of the table); 1858-1c, copies of the first form with the four-ring spine and the *w* in *way* perfect. The great bulk of copies printed will be found to fall into the second class (1858,1b). Of the first class (1858,1a) only an extremely limited number of copies has been found, four only having been seen by the writer, although several others have been reported. Likewise the number of copies of the third class (1858,1c) seems to be almost as small, only eight having been noted among the total number of first-form copies examined.

To come now to a study of the table. Its object is twofold: 1. It is designed to show, by the progressive breakdown of type, the chronological sequence of issues. 2. With the sequence thus established it reveals that at least two corrections of the plates were made during the progress of the issues, namely, those indicated in column 1 and 15, being the correction of the letter *w* in the word *way*, and the correction of the obscured type of page 161.

The table shows that typographically no differences have been noted between the five-ring and the earliest four-ring copies; the precedence here given to the five-ring variety is based on the assumption, already expressed, that the rare, five-ring spine was for a preliminary or trial binding, and does not, presumably, indicate a separate issue. No copies with fly-leaf dates have been reported, to afford a clue to priority.

The table shows next that during the progress of the first form of issue the type at pages 313 and 321 (columns 2 and 3 of 1858,1c) began to break down, being perfect in some copies, imperfect in others; imperfections are found always to exist at these points in the issues indicated on the table as later, thus corroborating the chronology of the table. In the second form of issue (1858,2) imperfections not previously existing are found, as would be expected in a later issue, examples being on the title-page (column 4), and at pages 51 and 95 (columns 5 and 6); furthermore, in this form of issue certain individual types are found sometimes perfect and sometimes imperfect, as in the examples on pages 113, 171, 185 (columns 7, 8, 9 of 1858,2), thus revealing, again, progressive deterioration.

Close typographical agreement exists among the three issues, or editions next following, namely, 1858,3, without rings on the spine, the 1859, large-paper issues, and the 1859 duodecimos. All three have imperfect type at pages 3, 149, 171, 189, 261 (columns 10 to 14), at the points indicated, where, in the earlier issues, there is perfect type. The date 1858 on the title-page of the first of these

three is the obvious reason for its precedence over the other two of this group, in the above table, but the matter of priority is, in this case, of minor importance. The lateness of the large-paper issue as compared with the two first forms of the duodecimo issue is of greater interest, and is shown in the table by the progress of imperfections as indicated in columns 10 to 15, and by the correction of the obscured type on page 161 (column 15). This lateness is corroborated by contemporary advertisements and the fly-leaf dates of presentation copies, to which reference is made later in discussing the large-paper issues. The chronological position of the 1859 duodecimo is hardly worth extended investigation, but is suggested by imperfect type at page 89 (column 16), always perfect in the large-paper copies, and imperfect also in the later, 1860, edition, issued after the plates were purchased by Ticknor and Fields, in November, 1859. The fly-leaf date January, 1859, has been noticed in a copy of the 1859, duodecimo, now in The Boston Athenæum Library. Some imperfections, present in copies of the earliest issues, were apparently never corrected while this set of plates was in use; examples of such are *huug* for *hung* on page 309 (column 18), and the imperfect *d* in *hand* on page 313 (column 19). It was not until the plates were acquired by Ticknor and Fields and used for the issue of 1860 that the incorrect *and* was changed to *any* at page 301 (column 17).

A further glance at the table reveals two cases where corrections were made on plates originally imperfect. One case is on page 161 (column 15) where obscured type was corrected before printing the third form of issue (no-ring); the other is on page 342 (column 1) where, in the first word of the last line, the initial letter *w* of the word *way* was made perfect, probably between two impressions, while the first form of end-papers was still in use. A careful proof-reading of the book may well disclose other examples of corrections made, but, in general, little attention seems to have been paid to improving the plates during the whole period they were in use.

From time to time abnormal copies turn up. Two are in Mr. Carroll A. Wilson's collection, he having made a point of collecting variants of *The Autocrat* of 1858. One of these curious copies has all the marks of the first form of issue except that it has plain yellow end-papers, apparently original; another, more exasperating, has the imperfect *way*, a mark of early copies, combined with the second form of end-papers, perhaps an intermingling, by the binder, of early sheets with late end-papers.

Summary

This survey of imperfections and of corrections in the plates would seem to establish the chronology of the issues, as outlined by previous writers and stated at the beginning of the present paper. Our arguments may be summarized as follows. The typographical perfection of the five-ring copies shows that they are at least contemporary with the earliest issue, and constitute either an experiment in binding, or a very early issue. The minimum of imperfection of type, and the blank leaf at the end, combine with the "School Books" end-paper, and the imperfect *w* in *way* to distinguish what we have called the first form of issue, these characteristics belonging as well to the five-ring copies, which we therefore include as of the first form. Progressive breaking down of type, the perfect *w* in *way*, the continued imperfection of type on page 161, and continuing perfect type elsewhere, combine with the last-leaf advertisement and the "Miscellaneous" form of end-papers to establish the second form of issue. A few copies with the *w* in *way* perfect and with type, as noted, at pages 313 and 321 sometimes perfect and sometimes imperfect, and having other marks of the first form of issue, constitute a small, intermediate group, falling between the first and second forms, caused perhaps by an intermixture of sheets (1858, 1c of the table). Corrections of the obscure type at page 161, and imperfections not in previous issues, together with plain end-papers and the absence of rings on the spine, serve to establish the third form of issue,

which so far as the typography is concerned, is practically identical with the large-paper issues. It will be noted that the chronology thus established is supported by the table (inserted above) of copies with fly-leaf dates, and by advertisements in the public press, mentioned elsewhere in this paper.

It remains now to discuss the rather scarce first-issue copies having bindings in other colors than tan, and the two forms of the large-paper issues, namely those with and those without the illustrations; but before entering on this discussion the infrequent copies with the 1858 date on the title-page and with double imprints will be noted.

Double Imprints

BOSTON-CINCINNATI: Boston:Phillips, Sampson and Company. Cincinnati: Rickey, Mallory & Co. M DCCC LVIII.

Composed of sheets of the first form of issue, with woodcut title-page, preceding the red and black title-page, illustrations on inserted leaves, and perfect type where, in many cases, later issues show imperfections. There is a period after the word "Company," on the title-page, an imperfect letter *w* in the word *way*, in the last line on page 342, and obscured type at lines 19, 20, 21 on page 161. The last leaf of the final signature is blank. The binding is of tan cloth, with the four-ring spine, the covers stamped in blind with the pattern of the normal first issue, and the end-papers are of the early form. The only copies reported are in The Harvard University Library, and in Mr. Wilson's collection.

BOSTON-LONDON: Boston:Phillips, Sampson and Company. London:Sampson, Low, Son, and Company. M DCCC LVIII.

Note the incorrect comma inserted in the name Sampson Low. Composed of sheets of the first form of issue, with woodcut title-page, but with a substitute, main title-page printed wholly in black. Except for the main title-leaf this volume is precisely like the Boston-Cincinnati copy just described. The binding is the normal tan cloth, with the four-ring spine, and the early end-

papers. Copies are in The New York Public Library and in Mr. Wilson's collection.

LONDON-BOSTON: London: Sampson Low, Son, & Co., 47. Ludgate Hill. Boston:—Phillips, Sampson, & Company. MDCCCLVIII.

Composed of sheets printed from the Boston plates, the title-page in red and black, and without the additional, woodcut title-page. The illustrations are on inserted leaves. In matters of imperfect type this agrees, so far as noted, with the second form of issue; it has the perfect *w* in *way*, in the last line on page 342, and the type is obscured on page 161, as in the first two forms of issue. The only cloth-bound copy as yet seen is in Mr. Wilson's collection; it is tan in color, but the pattern of stamping on the sides and spine is wholly different from the Boston binding, and it has, inside, a binder's tag, of Bone & Son, 76, Fleet Street, London. The last leaf of the final signature was removed before binding, this procedure suggesting that originally this leaf was not blank, but had the advertisements of the second form of issue, which would not be desirable for the English market. At the end of the book is a twelve-page advertisement, dated November, 1858, of Sampson Low publications. A copy in The Harvard Library has been rebound.

Color of Bindings

To throw light on questions relating to the color of first-issue bindings the notable features of twenty-seven copies of the book are here tabulated, all having the essential points of the normal copies of this issue, namely: correct end-papers; inserted, woodcut title-page; and the blank leaf after the index conjugate to pages 361/362. At the foot are added two copies of hybrid character. In selecting the copies for tabulation all in non-tan bindings were included that could be examined personally, with care.² As

² Since this paper was presented, a copy bound in blue has been examined, in the Chapin Library, Williams College, agreeing bibliographically with Nos. 21-24. It has added significance in that it carries the maddening fly-leaf date "Nov. 1858" under

regards the tan copies, a limited number, only, have been tabulated, although a good many have been looked over sufficiently to make sure that they were normal. The fourteen tan bindings numbered 5 to 18 in the table may be looked on as in every way typical of the run of first-issue, tan copies.

		<i>cloth</i>	<i>pat-</i>	<i>tern</i>	<i>hand</i>	<i>ph.</i>	<i>ph.</i>	<i>ph.</i>		
		313	321	342		<i>n in</i>	<i>i in</i>	<i>w in</i>	<i>early</i>	<i>last</i>
									<i>e.p.</i>	<i>leaf</i>
<i>Five rings:</i>										
1-3.	tan (3 copies)	A	perf.	perf.	imp.	yes	blank			
4.	green (Wilson)	A	perf.	perf.	imp.	yes	blank			
<i>Four rings:</i>										
5-18.	tan (14 copies)	A	perf.	perf.	imp.	yes	blank			
19.	blue (Wilson)	A	perf.	perf.	imp.	yes	blank			
20.	ol. green (Harvard)	F	perf.	perf.	imp.	yes	blank			
21.	tan (Wilson)	A	perf.	perf.	perf.	yes	blank			
22.	ol. green (Wilson)	F	perf.	perf.	perf.	yes	blank			
23.	dk. green (Harvard)	A	perf.	perf.	perf.	yes	blank			
24.	purple (Wilson)	B	perf.	perf.	perf.	yes	blank			
25.	maroon (Bost. Med. Lib.)	B	imp.	imp.	perf.	yes	blank			
26.	red (Wilson)	E	imp.	imp.	perf.	yes	blank			
27.	red (N. Y. P. L.)	E	imp.	imp.	perf.	yes	blank			
28.	choc. (Am. Ant. Soc.)	A	imp.	imp.	perf.	yes	adv.			
29.	tan (Wilson-Noyes)	A	imp.	imp.	perf.	yes	adv.			

Note. Letters in the column "cloth pattern" represent different patterns of embossing of the cloth used, the blind-stamped design in all cases being the normal design of the tan first issue. Note that number 21 is one of the rare tan copies with perfect *w in way*.

The object of this table of colored bindings is to throw light on the proportion of the whole number of copies of the first form of issue which were bound in the tan cloth, and the chronological position of the non-tan bindings in the progress of successive issues of this form. As to the proportion of tan and non-tan, it will be noted that of twenty-seven copies tabulated, of the purely first

the signature of Mr. Chapin's father, and address (Keene, N. H.) where he was then living.—C. A. W.

form, eighteen have tan bindings and nine were clothed in other colors. The ratio of eighteen to nine does not, however, by any means represent the true situation. Every colored, non-tan binding which today comes into the market is ear-marked for the discriminating collector, and is thus preserved and made available for study, even if not in all respects in prime condition, while many tan "firsts" are disposed of indiscriminately, or, if in unsaleable condition, rejected. In the present survey all non-tan bindings seen have been tabulated, while numerous tan copies have been passed by with only a cursory examination. The number of tan bindings, therefore, of the first form of issue, as compared with other colors, is overwhelmingly greater than the ratio of eighteen to nine. This census of copies leads to the conclusion that a comparatively small number of copies were in other colors than tan, and that they were either experimental or belong to a small issue in which bindings of several colors were put on the market.

It now remains to determine, if possible, at what stage the non-tan bindings were produced. The typographical table presented in a previous paragraph will help us, taken in conjunction with the color table in this section. First, our color table shows one colored binding, and only one, found with the five-ring spine. Our previous examination of the typography of the book has shown that the copies with a five-ring spine are, so far as seen, invariably in the better typographical condition, and are therefore to be ranked with the early copies issued. This green, five-ring copy would seem then to belong to the same early experiment or issue.

Turn now to a study of the other non-tan copies. Special attention has already been given to the change of plates whereby the letter *w* in the word *way* in the last line on page 342 was made perfect. This correction was found to exist in very few copies of the first form of issue, and therefore was rightly assumed to have taken place very late in the progress of the issue. Now one letter may seem a tenuous basis for conclusions, but this is definitely a

case where a conscious correction must have been made in the plate, and therefore becomes a safe point of departure in the discussion of chronological order.

Taking, then, the letter *w* as our criterion, where does it lead us? Disregarding the green, five-ring copy, as proved to be early, we note that of the eight other non-tan copies tabulated above, all having the characteristics of the first form of issue, two (numbers 19, 20) have the imperfect *w* and the other six have the letter perfect. These six, then, are to be placed late, and very late, in the progress of the first form of issue. It is to be noticed that three of the six (numbers 25, 26, 27) have other type imperfections characteristic of the later copies. The paucity of material makes any generalization unreliable, but may it not well be imagined that at the time when the corrections of the letter *w* was made in the plate, either a small issue was experimentally put out, with bindings of different colors, or that the stock of tan cloth gave out for the moment, and other varieties of cloth were substituted? The two non-tan bindings with the imperfect *w* (numbers 19, 20) may have been an earlier experiment or the result of earlier, left-over sheets intermixed with the corrected, new sheets. It will be kept in mind that impressions followed each other rapidly at this time to supply the increasing demand, for twenty thousand copies were said to have been sold in three weeks. In fact the small group of copies embraced in the class "1858,c" of the typographical table of a previous paragraph, may have been a portion of a new issue in which a remnant of early end-papers, and old sheets of the final signature, were intermixed with new sheets embracing the corrected letter *w*.

The American Antiquarian Society's chocolate copy, apparently in pristine condition, and one of Mr. Wilson's tan copies (Lucie A. Noyes copy of the table) are in complete agreement, and are peculiar in that they both have the early form of end-papers, while the last leaf of the final signature is not blank but has the advertising matter of the second form of issue; both copies have

the perfect *w* in *way*. Mr. Wilson's copy has the early fly-leaf date, November 19, 1858. These copies seem to be the result of the intermixing of a remainder of early end-papers with the new sheets of the second form of issue. The date on the fly-leaf of the Noyes copy is interesting as it may serve to date the second form of issue as before November 19, which is only a week after the first publication of the book; while the fly-leaf date, November 17, on one of the red copies (number 26 of the table) shows that the type had begun to deteriorate before that date, as indicated by the imperfections at pages 313 and 321, noted in the above table.

Large-Paper Issues

The more luxurious, large-paper issue was printed from the same plates as the duodecimo and followed the latter in December, in time for the Christmas trade. The earliest inscription date in a bound copy of this issue is December 18, 1858, in the copy presented by Holmes to his wife. The *Boston Evening Transcript* advertised this issue as still "in press" on December 8, and, on December 14, apparently as for sale, but it is not until December 24 that the same advertisement is printed with the words "just issued." The *American Publishers' Circular*, a weekly publication, in its issue for December 18, announced that the book was in press "and will be published in a few days." Mr. Wilson has a curious unbound copy, in stiff paper wrappers, with a pencilled inscription on the fly-leaf, which, although very faint, would seem to read "Mr. Partridge, Nov. 19, 1858." This would indicate that the large-paper issue was in preparation at this date and may suggest that it was the original intention to publish the duodecimo and the large-paper issues simultaneously. Perhaps the matter of the illustrations, to be discussed below, was the cause of the delay for the latter.

This "fine edition" was printed on lightly tinted paper, "the color of old lace," the leaf measuring $8\frac{3}{8} \times 5\frac{3}{8}$ inches, the greater width of the inner margins, as compared with those of the duodec-

imos, showing that it is truly large paper, and a separate impression. The regular binding was a pebbled brown cloth, bevelled, with full gilt edges, the covers bordered by a blind-stamped frame, with light brown, dark brown, or gray end-papers. The spine is lettered: | Autocrat | of the | Breakfast | Table | ——— | Holmes | ; at the foot: Boston. After the plates for the book had been purchased by Ticknor and Fields the name of that firm was placed at the foot of the spine; from the publishers' record it would seem that but ninety-six copies were so bound. The book was originally available, also, in either calf or morocco binding, the covers of which carried the same blind-stamping as the cloth copies.

Presentation, Large-paper Copies

Without illustrations:

OWH to his wife (Harvard)	Dec. 18, 1858	light brown end-papers
OWH to OWH, Jr. (Harvard)	Dec. 25, 1858	" " " "
OWH to C. E. Norton (Harvard)	no date	dark " " "
OWH to Pelham Curtis (Wilson)	" "	" " " "
OWH to T. W. Parsons (Widener)	" "	" " " "
OWH to Longfellow (Craigie House)	" "	gray " "

With illustrations:

Partridge copy, unbound (Wilson)	Nov. 19, 1858	
OWH to N. P. Hallowell (Harvard)	Dec. 25, 1858	light brown end-papers
OWH to E. H. Clark (Harvard Med.)	" " "	gray " "
OWH to classmates (Harvard)	Jan. 9, 1859	dark brown " "
OWH to Phineas Barnes (Wilson)	no date	gray " "
OWH to W. W. Morland (Harvard)	" "	gray " "

Note. The date of the Clark copy is from an inserted letter and so not wholly conclusive. Information as to the copies to classmates is based on the Crocker copy only.

This table presents two varieties of copies, with and without illustrations. The difference between the two is not simply the inclusion or omission of illustrations, printed on inserts. In the large-paper issues the illustrations, when present, are on leaves which are integral parts of the signatures in which they come. These leaves are, however, passed over in the pagination of the

volume so that the paging of the text is alike in both forms and agrees with the paging of the duodecimo issues. Now this difference in form, whereby some copies are without illustrations and some have them printed on leaves actually belonging to the signatures, calls for two entirely different impositions of the stereotyped plates of the text, thus proving that the two forms of the large-paper issues were actually separate and independent impressions. No change was made in the signature numbers at the foot of the page, which thus remain as if for printing in twelves, although the large-paper gatherings are in fours.

Which of the two large-paper forms is the earlier? From the table given above it will be seen that copies given to Mrs. Holmes and to the son were of the non-illustrated variety, and the fly-leaf date of the former copy, December 18, 1858, is the earliest date yet reported for a bound, large-paper copy. Moreover copies given by Holmes to his intimate friends in Cambridge and Boston, including Longfellow, Norton, Parsons, and Pelham Curtis, were without the illustrations, and Lowell, in his letter of acknowledgment, quoted below, and dated December 19, 1858, makes no mention of the illustrations. If we assume that the non-illustrated issue was released first, then the other form followed almost immediately, for Holmes sent a copy to N. P. Hallowell for Christmas. In general, the copies ordinarily seen are illustrated. It is of interest to note that the December issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, published about the twenty-second of November, announced, as quoted above in this paper, that the large-paper edition would have Hoppin's illustrations. Later advertisements in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, the *American Publishers' Circular*, and elsewhere, mention tinted paper, bevelled boards, and gilt edges, but say nothing of illustrations, which would seem far more worthy of special notice. Why is this? And what of the Partridge unbound, illustrated copy with the November 19 date? Letters from Hoppin, printed above, hint at some dissatisfaction with the illustrations. Is it possible that the edition was first made up with

their inclusion, as indicated by the Partridge copy? Then Holmes might have wished to have them omitted and a small impression may then have been run off in that style, largely for his use, the illustrated copies being withheld for a time. The fact, however, that the edition had already been advertised as having illustrations by the popular artist, Hoppin, may have brought so many demands that for later issues they were included, as a matter of course, for the large-paper, as well as for the duodecimo form. Another hypothesis might be based on the manufacturing processes. The earlier sheets may have been run off the press under the impression that the illustrations were to be inserts, as in the duodecimos; then came the question of procuring these inserts, for those already printed for the smaller form on cheaper paper would not do for the "fine edition." The decision to reimpose the plates and so save the bother of inserts may have then been made. Holmes, either by preference, or without giving the matter special thought, may have used the non-illustrated variety for his early presentation copies, they having very likely been pushed through the binder's hands in haste for his convenience.

Holmes distributed the large-paper copies among his friends with liberality. James Russell Lowell, acknowledging his copy, wrote to the author on December 19, 1858 (Letters of Lowell, edited by C. E. Norton, 1894, volume I, p. 288, the original being in the Holmes collection, Harvard University Library), "Thank you ever so much for the 'Autocrat' who comes at last drest like a gentleman. The color of the paper is just that which knowers love to see in old lace." Many others undoubtedly felt like pleasure at seeing the book published in a form more nearly suiting the charm of its content, and no wonder that the author's presentation copies are of this rather than the cheaper form. At his class dinner, held on January 6, 1859, Holmes presented copies to his twenty-eight classmates present. The manuscript record-book of the class, now in the Harvard archives, relates the proceedings at length, the pertinent parts being copied herewith:

A call from the Chairman (Gray) upon Holmes, which call was echoed on every side, brought our Doctor,—our Poet,—him to whom we all owe so much of the pleasure, the delight, and also so much of the success, of our Class-Meetings,—now become a permanent institution,—to his feet. He said he rose to “make his peace” with the Class, by expressing his heartfelt thanks to them for the kind reception they had uniformly given to him, and now especially for the favour they had manifested towards a little volume of his, which had come from the press within a few weeks, (the “Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.”) Much of its success, he said, he was sure was owing to the favour with which, from the very earliest portions of it, it had been received by the members of the Class of ’29. In token of his grateful feeling, and also of his kind regards for all his classmates, he added, he had caused his publishers to send to this place of our gathering a package of these books, and he should ask each one present to accept a copy from him.—It is needless to say that this most liberal and elegant donation, and the graceful manner in which it was announced, were greeted with the heartiest applause,—and accepted with delight.

The books were now, said Holmes, on their way to this house; adding,—(quite unexpectedly, for we had all mentally decided that we could not expect *the books*, and a *poem* beside,) “Meanwhile, I have a few lines, hastily, in the busiest days, put together, which I will read to the Class.” Renewed cheering; and Holmes read the humorous lines, commencing “Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?” Peals of laughter attended the reading; and, on motion of Russell, a general call was made for a *second reading*, which was given.

Holmes then called for the singing, “by the whole company,” of our bro. Smith’s Ode, “My Country! ’tis of thee”;—to which, in his (Holmes’s) poem just read, a warm and generous tribute had been rendered.

Angier leading, the Ode was then sung, in chorus.

Gray read the following, (sent to the chair anonymously, but believed to be from Wilder,) ;—

“Mr. President, Allow me to propose a sentiment—

“The Autocrat’s Muse—
Like the good widow’s cruise,
The more it flows out, the fuller it grows!
The more, then, we drink,
The less reason to think
It ever will come to a close!

“What promise is this,
How brimming with bliss,
To charm us as none but *our* poet is able?
Then, brothers, pledge here
A health and good cheer
To the pride and delight of *Our* Dinner Table.”

At this stage of our proceedings, an immense package (shall it not be plainly said, a *two-bushel basket*!)—appeared, brimming full of handsome books; and Dr. Holmes presented a copy of the “Autocrat of the Breakfast Table,” in royal octavo, on elegant paper, to each of the Class present.—It was difficult to control the pleasurable emotion of the moment, and some one exclaimed, “With the ‘Autocrat’ of our Poet, let us also have his *Autograph*!” To which Dr. H. most obligingly consented, and patiently for half an hour employed his pen in inscribing our names, with his own, in the beautiful volumes, which henceforth will be cherished possessions, dearly cherished by us all.

Copyright

Curiously enough *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* was not copyrighted. The publishers made feeble and ineffective gestures towards copyrighting the numbers of the *Atlantic Monthly* which contained it, ineffective because the provisions of the copyright act were not fulfilled. The Act of 1831 provided that before publication the applicant must deposit a printed copy of the title and within three months of publication deliver a copy of the book to the clerk of the District Court; but it was not until November 30, 1857, that the title of the first issue of the *Atlantic* was deposited, although it was published on October 27, the Harvard copy having been received at that library on November 9. A copy of the October, 1858, issue, containing the last chapter of *The Autocrat* was received at the Harvard Library on September 15, it was published on September 18, the title was not entered for copyright until September 25, and there seems to be no record of a copy of that issue ever having been deposited. The publication dates given above were obtained from the defendant’s answer when the matter was before the courts in 1894. Holmes himself presented the entire published book for copyright, entering the title on November 2, 1858, and depositing a copy on November 22, but this move proved to have no legal standing, when after his death an attempt was made by his estate to prevent unauthorized printing of the book. A full account of this celebrated case, prepared, at the writer’s request, by a lawyer, will be included in the Holmes bibliography now approaching completion.

Copies Sold

Unfortunately no record has been found of the number of impressions run off during the first year after the publication of *The Autocrat*, but the *Boston Evening Transcript* for November 24, 1858, and the *Atlantic Monthly* for December of the same year claim that ten thousand copies were sold within three days after publication, while the December 30 issue of the *Transcript* states that nearly twenty thousand were sold in three weeks. Fortunately the record of later issues has been preserved in the archives of the Riverside Press in Cambridge, and a survey of the so-called Ticknor sheet-stock record indicates that after the original plates were purchased by Ticknor and Fields they were continued in use until the type was reset and plates made for a new edition, in November, 1882. During this period of twenty-three years some thirty-four impressions were run off, with a total of about fourteen thousand copies. This does not include the editions manufactured in England, nor American editions from other plates to be described, it is hoped, at a later time and place.

Phillips, Sampson and Company

It is strange that with so many successful books on their list the firm of Phillips, Sampson and Company should have failed. Samuel C. Perkins, the sole survivor of the firm, filed a debtor's petition with the Probate and Insolvency Court in Suffolk County, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on September 17, 1859. The failure has been attributed to the financial depression of the years 1857 to 1859, and to unwise expansion of the firm's business. The plates of *The Autocrat* were purchased by Ticknor and Fields, in November, 1859, (*American Publishers' Circular*, November 26, 1859, and *American Literary Gazette*, August 15, 1871). A letter from Holmes to Dr. F. H. Hedge, dated November 21, 1859, in the Holmes collection, Harvard University Library, reveals that when the affairs of the firm were finally set-

tled, Holmes sent the money due him to the widow of Mr. Phillips, and proceeded also to collect five hundred dollars from others for her benefit.

The present study has not attempted to supply a new appreciation of this celebrated book, known, by title at least, to every student of literature, nor has it related its fate during the fourscore and more years since it first made its bow to the public. Is *The Autocrat* simply a book that we buy to "read some other time," as was the possibility suggested by its author in his *Epilogue to the Breakfast-Table Series*? To those who have followed this procedure the recommendation is hereby made that the volume now be taken down from its shelf, dusted off, and placed at the elbow of the easy-chair, to be dipped into when the mind is at leisure and in receptive mood. Surely much of the pleasure with which it was first received will be revived, enough to justify the prediction of Holmes's intimate friend, Dr. Jacob Bigelow, who wrote to him on January 17, 1859, the letter now being preserved in the Library of Congress: "I have just read *The Autocrat* from beginning to end, having previously enjoyed it only by snatches. . . . My opinion is that it must become a classic and a most notable chaperon for your future progeny of the same race."

A Chapter in The Shelley Legend

The Letter to Mary Shelley of December 16, 1816

By ROBERT METCALF SMITH *

THIS chapter in *The Shelley Legend* is the product of three co-workers and myself: Martha M. Schlegel of Allentown, Theodore G. Ehrsam of New York, and Louis A. Waters of Syracuse. It is only a portion of a much more extensive account of the manner in which Shelley biography from its inception has been the victim of wilful destruction of vital manuscript materials, the alteration of records, such as the deliberate changing of dates, of names, and of places, — of bogus provenance, and of forgeries which have persisted down through the years to befuddle biographers and critics. By such means has been built up *The Shelley Legend*, which we shall deal with at length in a larger work.

This chapter of the legend confines itself to the provenance and handwriting of a single letter owned until recently by Thomas J. Wise and now in the British Museum: Shelley's famous letter of December 15 (or 16), 1816, which Shelley is supposed to have sent from London to Mary at Bath, and which, you will recall, was the occasion of a fervid controversy in the *Times Literary Supplement* seven years ago — Seymour de Ricci maintaining the authenticity of this holograph letter, then in the possession of Thomas J. Wise, while Sylva Norman and Graham Pollard were as stoutly questioning it.¹

* Revision of a paper read at the meeting of the Society 22 June 1944.

¹ *Times Literary Supplement*, 1937, pp. 222, 240, 256, 275, 292, 308, 364, 412, 428; see also 1927, pp. 894, 977.

The importance of this letter to Shelley biography must not be underestimated, for upon a single paragraph in it depends one of the major charges against Harriet Westbrook (Shelley's first wife) as a prostitute, and her sister Eliza as a murderess. It is a charge against Harriet that Shelley admirers would gladly have expunged from his record; against Eliza the allegation is refuted by a friendly note which Shelley sent to her three days after the date of this accusation.² Notwithstanding the doubts which have been cast upon this letter now and then through the years, it has been accepted by the standard Shelley biographers from Dowden to Peck and is allegedly printed in full from the Wise holograph by Roger Ingpen in the Julian Edition of his Shelley *Letters*,³ and by Professor White in his recent monumental work on Shelley.⁴

According to the accepted account in the *Shelley and Mary* journals, Shelley returned from London, where he had been visiting Hunt, to Bath on Saturday evening, December 14, 1816, to receive on Sunday the 15th a letter from his friend Thomas Hookham relating the news of Harriet's suicide. He walked out with Mary, and then after dinner returned to London, traveling all night in order to secure his children by Harriet, — Ianthe and Charles. Having spent a day of the 16th, Monday, he says, "of somewhat agonizing sensations" and failed to obtain his children, he wrote Mary the letter in question in time for the evening mail.

The paragraph which has caused so much pain and comment is as follows:

It seems that this poor woman — the most innocent of her abhorred and unnatural family — was driven from her father's house, and descended the steps of prostitution until she lived with a groom of the name of Smith, who deserting her, she killed herself. — There can be no question that the beastly viper her sister,

² *Shelley's Lost Letters to Harriet*, edited with an introduction by Hotson, London, 1930, pp. 54-56.

³ *The Complete works of Percy Bysshe Shelley . . . Letters . . .* New York, Scribner's, 1926, volume IX, pp. 211-213.

⁴ *Shelley*, by Newman Ivey White, New York, Knopf, 1940, volume I, pp. 484-485; notes on p. 723.

unable to gain profit from her connexion with me — has secured to herself the fortune of the old man — who is now dying — by the murder of this poor creature. Every thing tends to prove, however, that beyond the mere shock of so hideous a catastrophe having fallen on a human being once so nearly connected with me, there would, in any case have been little to regret. Hookham, Longdill — every one, does me full justice; — bears testimony to the upright spirit and liberality of my conduct to her: — there is but one voice in condemnation of the detestable Westbrooks. If they should dare to bring it before Chancery, a scene of such fearful horror would be unfolded as would cover them with scorn and shame.

Strong evidence that Shelley never heard of this story, and that it is a later fabrication, lies in the fact that he never utilized it in the Chancery suit that immediately followed.

The paradox of Shelley criticism, however, is that in late years this story of Harriet has been increasingly doubted. Professor Peck strongly reproves the Shelley family's attempt to white-wash Shelley, yet accepts this Wise letter as genuine.⁵ Professor White is in the uncomfortable position of accepting and printing the same letter as authentic, and yet disbelieving the calumnies against Harriet, which Dowden, working under the influence of Mary Shelley's heirs, was too ready to introduce into his standard biography of 1886. White goes so far as to say that "No biographer since Dowden has credited the idea" of Harriet's infidelity⁶ and adds his conviction, in which we agree with him, that there was no infidelity on Harriet's part in spite of the fact that Shelley later, under the influence of the Godwins, came to believe so. Her last letter to Catherine Nugent shows, as Professor White avers, that Harriet loved Shelley until the day of her death.

If, then, the Wise holograph, which is held by Wise, Seymour de Ricci and White to be Shelley's genuine autograph, can be proved a forgery, Shelley's responsibility for this dubious letter disappears, unless there exists somewhere an undisclosed original. Certainly all the known manuscript versions are forgeries.

⁵ W. E. Peck, *Shelley: His Life and Work*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1927, volume I, p. 504.

⁶ White, *op. cit.*, I, p. 677.

Provenance

The surprising fact issuing from an examination of the provenance of this letter is that it was recognized and pronounced a forgery when it first appeared. If it was a forgery in 1851, there should be no difficulty in demonstrating that it is one now.

It will be recalled that during the years 1848-1851 a notorious forger, who styled himself "Major George Gordon Byron" and who claimed to be an illegitimate son of Lord Byron, foisted upon the book trade batches of forged letters of Byron, Shelley, and Keats. So skilful was his practice that he deceived for a time John Murray, Edward Moxon, Lord Londesborough, Lord Houghton, Lord Mahon, the Shelley family, and the whole rare book world, until in 1852 the supposed Shelley letters he had forged and Moxon had published (with an introduction by Robert Browning) were exposed as spurious.

To quote the *Athenaeum*:

But the "marvel" of the forgery is not yet told. At the same sale at which Mr. Moxon bought the Shelley letters were catalogued for sale a series of (unpublished) letters from Shelley to his wife, revealing the innermost secrets of his heart, and containing facts, not wholly dishonourable facts to a father's memory, but such as a son would wish to conceal. These letters were bought in by the son of Shelley, the present Sir Percy Shelley, — and are now proved, we are told, to be forgeries. To impose on the credulity of a collector is a minor offense compared with the crime of forging evidence against the dead, and still minor as in one instance against the fidelity of a woman.⁷

At this sale Sir Percy bought for £57. 15s. through Hookham, his agent, a total of eleven of these forged letters of Shelley to Mary comprising Lots 1193 through 1203.⁸ The letter we have in question was lot 1201. It is described as *four* pages quarto and addressed to "Mrs. Shelley, New Bond Street, Bath."

The next thing we learn about the provenance of this letter is

⁷ *Athenaeum*, no. 1271, March 6, 1852, p. 279.

⁸ S. de Ricci. *A Bibliography of Shelley's Letters*, 1927, p. 293.

from De Ricci, who records⁹ that it formerly belonged to H. Buxton Forman, and was passed by exchange in 1899 into the collection of Thomas J. Wise.

It is Mr. Wise himself who discloses the connecting link with the Shelley family. In defending the letter against Mr. Edmund Blunden's suspicions, Mr. Wise states:

The holograph of this letter is in my possession and has been in my possession for twenty-eight years. I acquired it from H. Buxton Forman. It had previously been owned by Shelley's son, Sir Percy Florence Shelley, and is absolutely genuine beyond any possible doubt or question.¹⁰

We may check the truth of Wise's and De Ricci's statements that Forman owned this letter by the transcript Forman made of it, which came to America at the time of the Forman sale, and which Peck utilized in his biography. (Volume I, pp. 503-504.)

We know also that Forman was in close touch with Sir Percy and Lady Shelley and secured from them valuable items from time to time for his remarkable Shelley library, but we find, as we shall presently disclose, Mr. Wise twice in error: (1) in the length of time (28 years) he said he had owned this letter and (2) in alleging, with no reference whatever to its peculiarities, that it is absolutely genuine beyond any possible doubt or question. Mr. Blunden, however, graciously deferred to Mr. Wise's bludgeon of authority, but when he reprinted his essay in *Votive Tablets*, (p. 227) he gathered courage to add the following footnote:

Mr. T. J. Wise, who owns the letter, took up this point and published his entire conviction that it is in Shelley's handwriting. With great respect for his authority in these matters, I must confess that the text of the letter (as well as the queer circumstances recorded above) puzzles me still. Did not Hookham report the last state of Harriet in his letter received by Shelley at Bath with Mary? and if so, why did Shelley repeat that matter to Mary from London? How did this letter dated December 15 go back to the post office as undeliverable, if it were the letter which Mary read and answered on December 17? After the essay above was first printed, Professor Hotson's *Shelley's Lost Letters to Harriet* appeared, and among them one from Shelley to Eliza Westbrook dated December 18, com-

⁹ Ibid., p. 237.

¹⁰ *Times Literary Supplement*, December 22, 1927, p. 977.

pletely contradictory in tone and balance to that of December 15; it is 'at least startling,' says the editor, 'to find the frank and sincere Shelley, three days after branding Eliza as a murderess, assuring the hated woman that he gives 'no faith to the imputations generally cast on your conduct or on that of Mr. Westbrook.' Professor Hotson, however, makes no suggestion that the letter of December 15 is unsafe. I am responsible for that, and believe that the reader will see some grounds for at least scrutinizing the matter.

Mr. Blunden was justified in returning to his position of skepticism, for Sylva Norman is quite in error in stating that "all the forgeries bought by Sir Percy and Lady Shelley were destroyed." We know that at least one forged Shelley letter was passed as genuine to Dowden by the Shelley family—and was duly included in the *Life*.¹¹ Dowden admits this when he says:

My conclusion is that I have been imposed upon by a clever forgery. The letter, which is now before me, belongs to Sir Percy Shelley's collection, but it was obtained by purchase.¹²

Further, the fact that Dowden had, in 1886, been handed, as he says, "letters certainly forged" proves that the Shelley family had either held on to some forgeries for over thirty years (after the famous sale of 1851) or that the family had acquired forgeries subsequent to this sale. Lady Shelley, in dividing her possessions in 1892, passed the forged letters on with the genuine and without such notation to Sir John C. Shelley-Rolls and to the Bodleian. There is, however, no statement as to what Forman really thought about the letter, but when we discover it again we find it reproduced in photo-facsimile as the original Shelley holograph letter in Thomas J. Wise's *The Ashley Library*¹³ and in his *A Shelley Library*.¹⁴

What has happened, therefore, is that a letter purchased by the

¹¹ E. Dowden. *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, London, 1886, I, pp. 53-54.

¹² *Athenaeum*, no. 3194, January 12, 1889, p. 51.

¹³ Volume V, pp. 25-26.

¹⁴ Pp. 4-5. As the original in the British Museum is at this time of robot bombing inaccessible, we are unable to examine the paper, the postmarks, and seals, and are obliged to confine our analysis and remarks to the Wise photo-facsimile.

Shelley heirs, exposed as a forgery in 1851, and discovered by them to be a forgery, has on its transfer through Forman and Wise regained respectability and re-entered Shelley biography in good standing principally through the asseverations of Messrs. Wise and De Ricci.

The Bogus Provenance

The way to respectability, however, seems to have been, as Mr. Graham Pollard suggests,¹⁵ to establish a new provenance for this letter in the interim, for it would hardly do to disclose that the Shelley heirs had parted with such a calumnious forged letter. A way to establish a new provenance was to affix to the letter another set of postmarks dated 1859 and to claim that it had been remarkably re-discovered in the Dead Letter Office. Obviously these postmarks were stamped on the letter for they plainly appear on the cover. But then the 1859 postmarks on a letter supposedly penned and mailed in 1816 will have to be explained. De Ricci, in the heat of his reply to Mrs. Norman, makes the preposterous assertion that as an expert stamp collector he can assure us that "deceptive imitations of postmarks do not occur before 1900, at the earliest,"¹⁶ a statement which does not coincide with his own claim of ten years before that Major Byron "went so far as to forge postmarks, a far more difficult achievement, as every stamp collector knows, than the imitation of manuscript."¹⁷ Dowden freely admits that "in some of the forgeries postmarks are well imitated,"¹⁸ and the letters of 1852 which Moxon published were proved spurious by discovery that the postmarks were forged.¹⁹ Mr. Pollard, too, has made other observations on Mr. de Ricci's reliability as a postal authority and a postmark expert that need not be repeated here.

¹⁵ *Times Literary Supplement*, April 17, 1937, p. 292.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, April 24, 1937, p. 308.

¹⁷ De Ricci, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

¹⁸ *Athenaeum*, no. 3194, January 12, 1889, p. 51.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 1271, March 6, 1852, pp. 278-279.

We may wonder, though, about De Ricci's reliability as a judge of handwriting when he says of this letter:

I have carefully examined the autograph in Mr. Wise's collection and can certify that every line of the text, including the paragraph referred to, is written by Shelley's own hand. The genuineness of this autograph is absolutely certain for any one familiar with Shelley's manuscripts.²⁰

Yet De Ricci had before asserted that Major Byron was "a skillful imitator of handwriting."²¹ In answer to Mr. Pollard, however, he commits himself to the further embarrassing contradictory statement that "forgers around the year 1850" were "unskillful" and "childish in the extreme."²²

When we consider the incalculable debt we all owe in Shelley bibliography to the labors of Messrs. Forman, Wise, and De Ricci, we cannot help being disconcerted by these various contradictory statements that only cloud the authenticity of this letter still more.

But it is not necessary to hold, as Mr. Pollard suggests, that the 1859 postmarks are manufactured forgeries; for some one might try to establish a new provenance by putting the letter in the mails and not reveal the source of this forged letter. Nevertheless, the 1859 postmarks on an 1816 letter still require explanation. Mr. de Ricci's improbable story will not suffice: "It is possible that the letter was stolen from Mary, about 1848, by G. Byron." (This is untrue if, as we have seen, Sir Percy, her son, bought it, after Mary's death, in 1851 and found it to be a G. Byron forgery)—"and that by accident a subsequent owner mixed it up with his outgoing mail in 1859." How can this statement be true if De Ricci's other statement is true—his quotation from the sales catalogue that the letter was purchased with ten others as lot 1201 by Sir Percy Florence's agent in 1851 and found by Sir Percy and Lady Shelley to be a G. Byron forgery? Mr. de Ricci next conjectures

²⁰ *Times Literary Supplement*, March 27, 1937, p. 240.

²¹ De Ricci, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

²² *Times Literary Supplement*, April 24, 1937, p. 308.

that "the Bath postman of 1859 failed to identify the addressee and the letter went to the dead-letter office, from which it was rescued by a wide-awake collector (a certain C. H. Taylor)." ²³

Mr. Blunden discloses that he had in his possession a purported copy of a letter this "wide-awake collector" sent to Leigh Hunt, then in his dying year, which, Blunden says, tends "to increase one's doubts." ²⁴ The "wide-awake collector," moreover, in trying to interest Hunt in purchasing the letter, sent Hunt a copy only and retained the original.

It is interesting, too, that Mr. Wise makes no reference to these postmarks or other irregularities either in his *Ashley Catalogue* or in his *Shelley Library*; moreover, as we shall see, he did not even transcribe the text of the letter correctly.

This then is what the critics have speculated about the history and provenance of this puzzling letter up to this time. But now fortunately have come to light several hitherto undisclosed letters which provide a missing link and cast certainly a more correct light than the conjectures out of thin air by De Ricci or the dogmatists out of nothing by Wise.

The New Provenance

On June 6, 1867, John Tilley, Secretary of the General Post Office, sent this same Bath letter to Mr. Spencer Shelley with whom he was evidently on friendly terms, as he addressed him "My dear Shelley." Mr. Spencer Shelley was the youngest and last survivor of the children of Sir John Shelley 6th Bart. of the elder branch of the Shelley family—the Poet's family being the younger branch and represented at that time by another Sir John Shelley, the poet's youngest brother. Mr. Tilley (writing his note on embossed post office stationery) explained that the Bath letter had come into his possession "a few years ago" but that he could not [doubtless because of the contents] "send it to Shelley's im-

²³ De Ricci, op. cit., p. 237.

²⁴ *Times Literary Supplement*, December 1, 1927, p. 894.

mediate representatives." On June 7, in a follow-up note he informed Spencer Shelley that he "meant him to keep the letter" [there is no evidence that he sold it to Spencer Shelley] and stated that the probability was that it was duly delivered in 1816 and that in 1859 it was accidentally "put into the post at Bath."

Thereupon Spencer Shelley sent a copy of it to Lady Jane Shelley for her opinion. She replied from Boscombe on June 9 that it was:

the true copy word for word from the original which is in our possession, and from which forgeries have been made three times over—Mrs. Shelley [Mary] left this letter locked up with others from Shelley in her desk at Marlow when they left for Italy. Peacock who at that time lived at Marlow had the care of all things left behind and on Shelley's death Mrs. Shelley sent for her desk and received it with the letters in it [this statement the letters of Shelley and Mary extant prove to be correct] but in the interval forgeries had been made of all these letters so wonderfully executed that even we cannot detect the fraud at once.^{24a}

Lady Shelley's account would push the forging of Shelley letters back to a period between 1817 and 1823. We do not believe any Shelley forgeries were perpetrated before 1845; we believe Lady Jane Shelley used the desk story just as Major Byron before her had used it with dealers to account for his possession of Shelley letters which he had forged. She employed the same story for the forgeries she and Sir Percy bought from him in 1851 and thereafter, which they knew Major Byron had fabricated. Sir Percy and Lady Shelley's total lack of mention of Major Byron as the forger is eloquent. Lady Shelley continues:

Twice have forgeries of these very letters been brought to us and twice we have bought them.

The original is not written on a sheet of paper, and is not signed with his full name—he never signed his name in writing to his wife—only his initials or—"Elf." [yet she says presently her original is signed "Shelley"]. The watermark in the paper of some of these forgeries bears a later date than the letters. [This sentence shows that the Shelleys were still keeping the forged letters in 1867].

It is most mysterious. . . .

^{24a} This letter and the others quoted and referred to under this heading, twelve in all, are in the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg collection of The New York Public Library, and are used here by special permission.

About a year after Mrs. Shelley's death [three and one-half months—Mary died February 1, the sale was May 12, 1851] a forgery of this letter and two or three others [eleven in 1851] were offered for sale at a public auction. Hookham wrote to us thinking they were genuine—and we paid 60 guineas for them [auction price £57.15s.]—every one were forgeries, but true copies nevertheless for on examining Mrs. Shelley's papers some years later a sealed packet marked "Shelley's letters" was found to contain amongst others the originals of those we had purchased at so high a price and the watermark bore the date of 1826 [the watermark of the Bath letter is 1814] four years after Shelley's death.

This is essentially the same story Lady Shelley told Maud Rolleston in *Talks with Lady Shelley*, (1925, p. 122). It seems to us a curious mixture of fact and fiction. There is no evidence of forged Shelley letters in existence until Major Byron began his activities with the Shelley family in 1845; and no reason why anyone should have forged copies of the letters in Shelley and Mary's Marlow desk between 1817 and 1823 when such letters had no market value for anyone. The Peacock desk story was lifted out of Shelley's correspondence by Major Byron so he could account for Shelley letters, real or forged, in his possession.

On June 11th, after Spencer Shelley had informed Tilley that Lady Jane had pronounced the letter a forgery, Tilley reiterated the belief of the post office that the letter was posted again in 1859 by mistake and sent to Bath when "cannot be found" was written on it, then sent to the Dead Letter Office and brought to him. He added that if, as Lady Shelley asserted, it was a forgery "the postmarks of 1859 had to be explained away."

On June 23 Lady Shelley wrote again from Boscombe to Spencer Shelley that she had read over the copy of the letter that he had sent and compared it "with the original that is written on three sheets of note paper—it is word for word the same excepting that in the original there is a word left out—it is signed 'Shelley'—no P. B.—and this of course would not do for a forgery" [Dowden in 1886 must have used this so-called original since he also prints the signature "Shelley"].

Spencer Shelley kept the Bath letter along with Tilley's and Lady Jane's correspondence concerning it until his death on March 10, 1908 at the age of 94, when his wife, Susanna (or Susan) Shelley, age 84, found it among his papers and wrote to Mr. Charles Bell of the Bodleian who referred her to H. Buxton Forman as a possible purchaser. On May 22 she inquired of Forman and on the 31st wrote him again that her nephew, Mr. Richard Edgecumbe had offered her £20 for it. Mrs. Spencer Shelley maintained to Forman that the letter must be genuine since it had never been delivered; that Shelley's letter could hardly be a forgery because it "was never out of the possession of the post office until Mr. Tilley gave it to my husband." Considering, however, that Mrs. Spencer Shelley was 84 years of age, and had not yet discovered the Tilley-Lady Shelley letters of 1867, and, as she says, was totally blind, having to dictate her correspondence, we may pardon her for being somewhat confused in her defense of this letter which she naturally hoped was authentic.

On receiving a favorable reply from Forman, Mrs. Spencer Shelley on June 4 sent him word that her daughter, Mrs. Dent, would be happy to show the letter to him some day after June 11. She added that since the letter bears the postmarks of 1859, it could not have been lost by Mary Shelley who died in 1851—another confused and shaky argument.

By June 15, however, when she had found Tilley's and Lady Shelley's correspondence, she wrote Forman immediately apprising him of their contents. Against Lady Shelley she argued that Tilley must have been a judge of postmarks. She questioned Lady Shelley's purported original on the grounds that letters written to go through the post in 1816 would not have been written:

on 3 or 4 [Lady Shelley wrote "three"] sheets of *Note* paper. I can remember the days of franking and the shoals of letters which my Father who was private secretary to both Lord Grey and Lord Melbourne used to frank and in those days no one wrote on *Note* paper.

[Mrs. Spencer Shelley does not realize that Shelley in 1816 wrote on anything handy and cared nothing about postal expense, much to Godwin's discomfort.]

On July 2 Mrs. Spencer Shelley received Forman's offer of £21 and acknowledged a cheque for this sum in a final settlement dated July 6, 1908. Either at this time or later Forman also acquired the correspondence concerning authenticity above described.

It is questionable whether the problems of this letter through all these mazes of questions, conjectures, and transfers will ever be unravelled, but certain facts, which now seem clear, must be kept firmly in mind:

- (1) That there is only one 4-page quarto Bath letter in existence bearing both 1816 and 1859 postmarks.
- (2) That according to the sales catalogue it was one of the eleven forged letters Hookham purchased for Sir Percy and Lady Jane on May 12, 1851 and discovered and declared by them to be a forgery.
- (3) That the original, which Lady Jane Shelley claimed still to have in 1867, was on *three* sheets of *Note* paper. This "original" has never been forthcoming.
- (4) That though identical in text—except for one additional word [Lady Shelley does not say what word] this purported original also differs in bearing the signature "Shelley" instead of P. B. Shelley.
- (5) That Lady Shelley pronounced the Bath letter a forgery in 1867, while Tilley, the postal authority, believed it genuine—postmarks and all.
- (6) That Forman, in spite of Lady Shelley's charge against it as a forgery, believed the letter genuine or he would hardly have paid £21 for it. Lady Shelley's claim of having the original on three sheets of *Note* paper did not deter him.
- (7) That Mr. Wise was in error in stating (1) that he acquired the letter from Forman in 1899 and (2) that in 1927 it had been in his possession 28 years; for the documents show that Forman did not buy it until July of 1908 and, therefore, must have passed it on in exchange to Wise after that date, but—a strange omission—without the accompanying letters by Tilley in favor of, and by Lady Jane Shelley against, its genuineness.
- (8) That Forman's purchase and Wise's subsequent declaration in favor of the letter in 1927, as well as De Ricci's, do not cast a favorable light on their knowledge of Shelley's handwriting.

- (9) That it is particularly ironic to observe Wise defending its authenticity by asserting that it was once in the possession of Sir Percy Florence Shelley [who pronounced it a forgery], and to observe Lady Jane repeatedly asserting in 1867 that it is a forgery.

After a checkered provenance like this, it would be a rash buyer who would follow Forman's example and wager £21 on its authenticity. It is curious that Tilley, who believed the postmarks genuine, made no mention of the fact that one of the 1859 Bath postmarks is of the "late fee" variety, used at this period to indicate that the letter had been handed in at the post office after 6 p.m. and was therefore subject to additional charges. These were one penny extra if handed in after 6 p.m. and before 7 p.m. and six pence if after 7 p.m. and before 7.30 p.m. (See *The Postmarks of Great Britain and Ireland*, by R. C. Alcock and F. C. Holland, page 361). Why should a "late fee" postmark of 1859 be present at all on this letter? This would seem to show, if the postmarks are genuine, that the letter escaped from Lady Jane Shelley's hands into the post office in 1859, received this irregular Bath "late fee" stamp [it was late, to be sure, by 43 years], went to the Dead Letter Office and into the hands of Tilley, who did not reveal his possession of it until 1867. Nor does Tilley mention the total lack of an adhesive stamp which in 1859 would have been required.

To summarize what we now know to be the provenance of this letter, from the beginning: It was originally forged by Major Byron as one of a batch of an additional eleven letters he tried to sell to Mary before her death in February, 1851. (See further, as to this, Frederick L. Jones's recently published *The Letters of Mary Shelley*, 1944, II, 263-270). On her refusal to buy them, a purchaser (?) from Byron waited until the following May and then put them up for auction. Hookham bought them for Sir Percy and Lady Shelley on May 12, and they discovered and declared them to be forgeries. The Bath letter, number 1201 in this lot of eleven letters [the other ten Lady Shelley gave to Sir John

Shelley-Rolls on her decease], escaped into the Bath post office, received two Bath postmarks of 1859, one a "late fee" stamp, and the written note "not to be found," went to the Dead Letter Office and then to Mr. Tilley who presented it to Spencer Shelley in 1867. Spencer Shelley's wife, Susanna, sold it for £21 to Forman in 1908. Forman passed it in exchange to Mr. T. J. Wise, who issued it in photo-facsimile in his *A Shelley Library* in 1924; and in 1927 maintained with De Ricci that it was the only genuine original, and that every particle of it was in Shelley's handwriting. It now resides in the Wise collection of the British Museum.

Other Versions

Since Lady Shelley declared that this letter had been three times forged we may well pass now to an examination of the other versions on record. This letter was one that Major Byron found profitable to duplicate in parts and wholes, and in various forms. He not only succeeded in selling the Wise letter, which is *four* pages quarto, to the Shelley family, but he fabricated another which someone else bought, and which appeared in the Frederickson Sale (no. 2370) of May 24, 1897. This was dated December 15, 1816 and listed as *two* pages quarto. The Shelley family also acquired a third which Lady Shelley presented, as the "original," to the Bodleian in 1892. This variant is *seven* pages octavo, not three, with no address or date, and has been termed variously by those who have examined it: by Grylls and De Ricci, a forgery; by Ingpen, a manuscript copy; by Wise, a copy. Mr. de Ricci is, therefore, in error in identifying this copy with lot 1201²⁵ which is *four* pages quarto.

Moreover, so far as we actually know, this is the only other letter of its kind that Lady Shelley had in her possession—unless the Bodleian authorities or the Earl of Abinger or Sir John Shelley-Rolls, who received respectively third portions of Lady Shelley's possessions, have such a fourth "genuine original" still un-

²⁵ De Ricci, op. cit., p. 238.

disclosed—namely the one Lady Shelley maintained she had in 1867 on three sheets of *Note* paper. If so, then a fifth appeared in the sale of Sir Robert Peel's heirlooms at Robinson and Fisher's, May 15, 1900 (catalogue, p. 75, no. 945), was sold for \$21 to Sabin, was later printed as genuine by Harry B. Smith in *A Sentimental Library*,²⁶ and last year was purchased as a Major Byron forgery for Lehigh's Shelley collection. This version is *three* pages quarto. De Ricci also lists a sixth (date not stated)²⁷ sold at Sotheby's, March 31, 1875 (p. 62, no. 467) which passed for £3 3s. to Sabin. "Probably passed into the Frederickson collection and may well be his forged transcript of the letter of 15 (16) December 1816." This version is also *three* pages quarto, and since Frederickson had only one letter of this date in his sale, and Harry B. Smith bought it with one other for \$7.50, it is probable that De Ricci is in error in identifying with Harry B. Smith the fifth copy which appeared in the sale of Robinson and Fisher's. There seem to be, therefore, possibly five versions instead of six, all of them products of Major Byron until the long-lost "genuine original," if existent, shall appear.

No one will seriously contend, we trust, that Shelley on that hectic Monday evening wrote all of these versions of this letter. We regret that opportunity does not permit a variorum treatment of them all.

If, however, we take the one at hand—the Lehigh copy—and compare it with the Wise version, we shall see that they are, as the provenance has revealed, the work not of Shelley but of the forger. Both copies contain, in similar hand, the date, December 1816; but the Wise letter has December 15, 1816; the Lehigh, just December 1816. The Wise "December 15," though, has been tampered with and changed from "15" to "16". Why is this? Because someone later discovered that since Shelley was in Bath and traveling on the 15th to London, he could not have writ-

²⁶ Pp. 175-176.

²⁷ De Ricci, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

ten the purported letter until the 16th. This change could not have been made before 1882 except by some one who had access to the *Shelley and Mary* manuscript journals in the private and restricted possession of Lady Shelley from 1851 to 1882. In 1882 Lady Shelley herself published a bowdlerized version of the journals. The forger, however much he knew about the Shelley family in 1848, could not have distinguished between December 15 or December 16 without these diaries. He hit the date as nearly as he could. Only a member of, or some one in close connection with the Shelley family, and studying Shelley's career day by day could have made this change.

If you will now examine the beginning of each letter, you will find the identical opening sentence: "I have spent a day, my beloved, of somewhat agonizing sensations." Then follows in the Lehigh letter a carefully constructed mosaic of sentences on Platonic love culled from Shelley's essays, *On Love*, and *On the Literature, the Arts, and the Manners of the Athenians* which Moxon had published in 1840. This was one of Major Byron's common practices, as we shall demonstrate elsewhere, in his other Shelley forgeries.

At the close of the Lehigh letter Platonic love suddenly disappears, and the two texts begin to resemble each other again.

In the Lehigh letter: "Do you dearest and best seek happiness in your own pure bosom."

In the Wise letter: "Do you dearest and best seek happiness—where it ought to reside in your own pure and perfect bosom."

In the Lehigh letter: "Darling William—kiss his blue eyes!"

In the Wise letter: "Darling William, too! My eyes overflow with tears."

Major Byron derived this phrase of Shelley's from a Shelley letter (August 23, 1818) which has as its postscript: "Kiss the blue-eyed darlings for me and don't let William forget me," a letter the Major found in Mary Shelley's *Essays, Letters from*

Abroad, etc., volume II, page 138 — a source of much of his forged material.

Finally, if the style of these letters may justly be called by Mr. Blunden "singularly simpering, weak, and wandering" we may account for it on the grounds that Major Byron, and not Shelley, was their composer.

Handwriting Evidences

We may now proceed with an examination of the holograph text. It must be observed that the letter is given, even by Wise, in two variant versions: the holograph reproduction as over against his printed text. The holograph, for example, has the words "yet" (page 1, line 8) and "that" (page 1, line 11) clearly visible; but neither of these appears in Wise's printed version. "Messages," the last word of the holograph, is printed as "message" by Wise and subsequent editors.²⁸

There are two deletions, or words stricken out, which suggest that the forger may have made mistakes in the careful copying of his prepared text: "form" (page 2, line 13) and "I had" or "that" (page 4, third line from bottom). In his haste the forger failed in one sentence to include a part of the verb and wrote (page 3, line 19): "I not recommend her to your care," to which Wise adds the conjectural word "need."

Two more conjectural readings have been advanced for the words torn out by the breaking of the seal; at the end of a line (page 3, line 10) we have the beginning of a word in the letters "up" which Garnett in *Relics of Shelley* completes into "uprightness and," a reading not likely because of the little room left on the sheet for this long word. Dowden and Wise read it as "up-

²⁸ *The Ashley Library. A Catalogue . . . collected by Thomas James Wise*. London, Printed for private circulation only, 1924. Volume V, p. 25. Ingpen, in the Julian edition of Shelley's Letters, volume X, p. 424, says: "The original is in the possession of Mr. T. J. Wise, who has kindly allowed me to collate it." But Ingpen also omits these two words and misreads the third in his editing of the letter; White quotes from Ingpen.

right spirit and," but this, too, is only a guess from the context. No one seems to have noticed that in the Wise holograph, at the beginning of line 11 (of page 3) where the tear occurs, there is part of a loop still left intact on the page, a loop the like of which the forger employs for his "d"s, both upper and lower case.

At the end of the fourth page, where the letter would normally have ended, the forger ran out of room. He had begun a new sentence with the part-word "Tomor" which he had to break in two, adding "row" at the very base of the page, on a line by itself. Thus far the forger had begun the last sentence as Dowden prints it (II, page 69): "Tomorrow I will write again." But the forger had no space in which to finish the sentence or even to sign Shelley's name at the base of page 4. Hence he went back to the top of the first page to conclude the letter, deviating from the text as given by Dowden. Having added the words: "write a long letter, & give me some answer to Hunt's messages," he had no room for the complimentary close — which we would naturally expect in an intimate letter to Mary — but for only the signature, which he inserted as the formal "P. B. Shelley."²⁹

Examining the portion of the letter containing the address, we note that there is no adhesive stamp on the letter, as there should have been if the letter actually went through the mails in 1859. The "M" in "Mrs" has obviously been doctored by the forger, who no doubt forgot himself when he began the first stroke of the "M" and did not make it as tall as he should have; it then became necessary for him to draw a larger stroke at the left. This he did, but the result is clearly botched, nothing like the smooth-flowing "M" which is one of Shelley's characteristic letters.

The word "Shelley" in the address does not possess the extreme slant that a genuine Shelley signature has. Shelley's signatures slant to the right at an angle of about 47 to 48 degrees, whereas this forged "Shelley" slants at only 44 or 45 degrees. The "y" at

²⁹ The Dowden version reads: "Your own affectionate Shelley."

the end of the word does not have a long, curved tail in any of Shelley's authentic signatures, but this "y" curves down and around to the left almost to the "h" of "Shelley." There are two different types of "B"s used on the address page, neither of them like Shelley's; the ornate one used in "Bath" is so far removed from Shelley's own style as to offer no real comparison.

The signature, on page 1, offers special problems. The "P" is made differently from the way Shelley made his: the loop at the bottom of the letter is rarely to be found in his signatures. The "B" is too short and fat and possesses not enough slant to be one of Shelley's; indeed, it is almost vertical. The bottom loop of the "S" swings around and over to the right; at most, the loop in Shelley's "S" swings to an upright position, though it more often points to the left, not looping at all. The final "y" of the "Shelley" has a type of tail not usually to be found in Shelley's signatures. These remarks also apply to the signature on the Lehigh letter. Compare these signatures with that on the genuine letter of July 17, 1816, here reproduced.

In the "London" on the same page, the height of the "o" is less than that of the first "n" which follows it, while in every instance where this word occurs on an undisputed Shelley document the height of this first "o" is always greater than that of the "n" immediately following.

There is much more to prove that this is not Shelley's hand. On the first page of this letter alone there are at least seventeen "g"s and "y"s with long sweeping tails running far to the left, in the body of the document alone. Now Shelley did employ this form, but not so liberally, and usually only as a final letter, while three of these are not final letters. Notice in contrast the very sparse use of these long sweeping tails in the genuine letter of July 17, 1816.

If now you consider the body of the letter as a whole and compare it with the genuine letter here reproduced, you will at once notice the difference in general appearance. Close observation re-

veals that the relative slant and proportions and spacing are all three different in the alleged letter to Mary from what they are in the Geneva letter of July 17, 1816.³⁰ This is one of the surest indications that the letter is forged. It is comparatively easy for a skilled forger to imitate letter forms and general proportions in a single word, or even a line of writing, but when he has to write line after line, always trying to imitate the letter forms, the slant and the proportions within each word, it is almost impossible at the same time to achieve a correct relationship between the lines and the paragraphs taken as a whole. And yet this alone would not prove it a forgery, but it is just another of the number of small facts, each separately unimportant, which are not right cumulatively for Shelley's style. The sum is growing, and it becomes more and more difficult to understand why all of these things should have happened to Shelley's handwriting in one day, and in the space of one brief letter.

It will perhaps not be amiss to summarize here the motives which were achieved by the forging of this letter:

- 1) To show Shelley much upset by Harriet's death and still to indicate there was not too great a personal loss: "Every thing tends to prove, however, that beyond the mere shock of so hideous a catastrophe having fallen on a human being once so nearly connected with me, there would, in any case have been little to regret."
- 2) To indicate Shelley's solicitude for and love of his children by Harriet.
- 3) To absolve Shelley from all blame in Harriet's suicide: "Hookham, Longdill—every one, does me full justice."
- 4) To put the blame for Harriet's death on the Westbrooks generally and on Eliza in particular: "there is but one voice in condemnation of the detestable Westbrooks" and "by the murder of this poor creature."
- 5) To link Harriet Shelley with the Harriet Smith of the Hookham letter and with the inquest papers: "she lived with a groom of the name of Smith."

³⁰ The original letter, here reproduced by permission, is owned by The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Readers who wish to compare the handwriting of Shelley in this letter with other genuine Shelley autographs are referred to the Harvard *Shelley Notebook* issued by G. E. Woodberry, which, though sometimes erroneously assigned, contains abundant samples of Mary Shelley's and of Shelley's chirography.

- 6) To convict Harriet of prostitution and thus relieve Shelley of all blame: "and descended the steps of prostitution."
- 7) To establish that Shelley's life with Mary had been a veritable heaven, and that Shelley was most eager to marry Mary: "I told him that I was under contract of marriage to you" and "at least it is consoling to know that if the contest should arise it would have its termination in your nominal union with me—that after having blessed me with a life a world of real happiness, a mere form appertaining to you will not be barren of good."
- 8) To prove Shelley's great love for Mary: "Do you dearest and best seek happiness—where it ought to reside in your own pure and perfect bosom; in the thoughts of how dear and good you are to me."

In conclusion we would emphasize again the following main points in our contention that the December 15-16, 1816 letter is a Major Byron forgery:

I. Shelley's friendly letter to Eliza Westbrook of December 18, 1816, absolving her of all blame, disproves his hatred of her as a murderess displayed in this letter of two days before.

II. Harriet's father, Mr. Westbrook, was not, as the letter states, at death's door, but was hale and hearty enough to bring a vigorous and successful Chancery suit against Shelley for the children.

III. Shelley did not use the charge of infidelity and prostitution against Harriet in the Chancery suit, a charge which would have weighed heavily in his favor.

IV. The texts of this letter are numerous and varied; and all known copies are, by their origin and provenance, forgeries.

V. The letter bears evidence, with its 1859 postmarks, of additional tampering to create a false provenance.

VI. The relation of Wise to this letter certainly does not increase our confidence. Seymour de Ricci's statements are so contradictory that we judge the later ones are made in the heat of controversy and in forgetfulness of what he had written ten years before. Doubtless Professor White realizes now that in spite of his deferences to Mr. Wise, to whom he was deeply indebted, he

was in bad company, and that Mr. Wise, like Shelley, turned out to be an "unextinguished hearth"—only of a very different kind.

VII. The marked discrepancies in the handwriting of this letter when it is compared with genuine specimens of Shelley's handwriting are inexplicable except on the basis of forgery.

AUTHORS OF PAPERS IN THIS ISSUE

JOHN ELIOT ALDEN is on the staff of The Harvard College Library and has previously contributed to the Papers.

THOMAS FRANKLIN CURRIER, for many years Assistant Librarian, is now emeritus and Consultant in American literary bibliography of The Harvard College Library. He is the author of the definitive Whittier bibliography.

DR. ROBERT METCALF SMITH is professor of English at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and an author and editor of note. He here acknowledges the contribution to this paper made by Mr. Louis A. Waters of Syracuse in analyzing the handwriting. Mr. Waters is a specialist in questioned documents in the employ of the State of New York.

with a long letter, & give me some assurance
of Stuart's misapprehensions.

P.B. Shelley

London, Dec. 15. 1818.

I have spent a day, my beloved, of somewhat
agitating sensations; such as the contemplation of
you & thy & hard heartedness exceeding all emotion
must produce. Leigh Stuart has been with me
all day & his delicate & tender attention to me
his kind speeches of you, have sustained me against
the weight of the horror of this event.
The children I have not yet got. I have seen
Longville who accompanies proceeding with the
utmost caution and watchfulness. He seems intemperate.
I told him that I was under contract of marriage
to you; & he said that in such an event-
ual pretences to detain the children would cease.
Stuart said very delicately that this would be
nothing intelligence for you - & yes, my only hope
in looking back, this will be one among the

innumerable benefits which you will have
bestowed upon me, & which will still be inferior
in value to that greatest of benefits - yourself.
it is then you that I can entertain without
the pain the recollection of the horrors of unnatural
villainy that led to this dark dreadful death
- I am to hear tomorrow from Deese whether
or no, I am to engage in a contest for the
children. - At least it is contrary to the
spirit of the contest should arise it would
have its termination in your nominal union
with me. - that after having blessed me with
a life a world of real happiness, & from
me from appearing to you will not be
barren of good. -

It seems that this poor woman - the most
innocent of her abhorred & unnatural family
was driven from her father's house, & descended
the steps of prostitution until she lived with
a groom of the name of Smith, & so deserting
her, she killed herself - You can be
no question that the beastly viper her

sister, unable to gain profit from her connection
with me - has secured to herself the fortune
of the old man - who is now dying - by the
murder of this poor creature. Every thing tends
to prove, however, that beyond the mere shock
of so hideous a catastrophe having fallen on
a human being once so nearly connected with
me, there would, in any case have been little
to regret. God bless, long life - every one does
me full justice - bears testimony to the up.

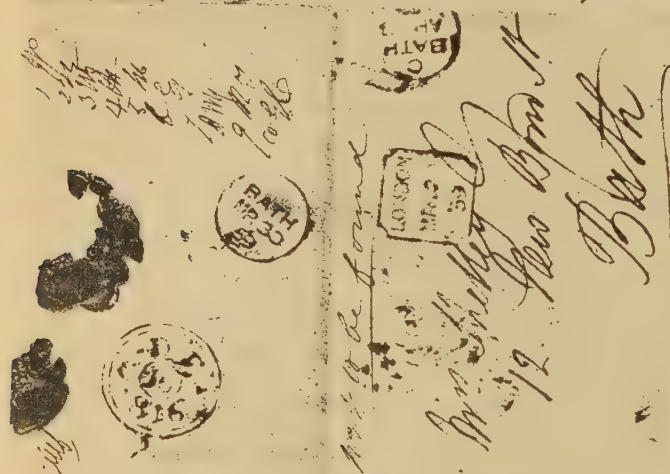
Wickedness of my conduct to her: - I am
a rat one voice in condemnation of the de-
testable deed. If they should dare to bring
before the jury - a scene of such fearful horror
would be witnessed as would cover them with
scorn & shame.

How is Alex? I do not tell her, but I may
tell you how deeply I am interested in her safety.

Do not recommend her to your care. Give her
any kind of help from me, & calm her spirits
as well as you can.

Do not ask you to calm your own - I am

both in health - tho somewhat faint & agitated -
 - but the affectionate attentions shown me by
 Mont have been sustaining & restorative more
 than I can tell. Do you dearest & best
 seek happiness - when it ought to reside in



your own pure & perfect bosom. In the thoughts
 of how dear & how good you are to me - how
 wise, & how悉悉悉悉悉悉悉悉 you are
 feel also now destined to become. Remember
 my poor babes Samth & Charles. How how I can
 & find a mother they will find in you - Darling
 William too! - My eyes overflow with tears. I am yours

Genoa, July 17. 1816

I write by this post to Mr. Stame giving the authority which you request. Before this letter arrives you will however have received another from me affording a solution of the questions contained in your last, & indicating that request superfluous. The delay which has occurred in writing to Mr. St. & to you, arose simply from my expecting by every post an acknowledgment of the letter to which I allude.

I need not again assert that I think Mr. Turner neither a good man nor a good judge of men. He acted in your affairs with duplicity & accused me indirectly of the duplicity which he was conscious attacked in his own conduct. Mr. Turner was in the instance which you state & will be in every instance decided in his judgment of me, for no other reason than because

he suspects me to be like himself.

I recommend to you caution in ascertaining the value of the estates before you allow the deeds to be drawn, as of course altho the business is nominally confided to Mr. Ham you are really the agent.

To suppose it will be necessary to dispatch the deeds further for signature, a power of attorney I am afraid will suffice. However that may be, let us choose first the easiest & quickest, next the securest plan. I shall not remain longer at home than affairs require, & hope to have the earliest & most intelligent information from you on a question so important to us both.

Wm. M. Kelley

London, Dec. 1846.

I have spent a day, my beloved, of somewhat agonising sensations. — Please be-
lieved and, with him, in the existence of
a spiritual antitype of the soul, so that
we are born, ^{where} there is something within us,
which, from the instant we live & move,

chest us into Baptism — I shall write
again to-morrow — Darling William — kiss his
blue eyes! Do you dearest & best seek hap-
piness in your own pure bosom, and remember

Ever yours

R. B. Shelley

I am too late for the mail

I therefore open the parcel to add these lines —
I shall dispatch it by the coach.

Lehigh forgery, top half of first page and
bottom half of last (third) page

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VOLUME THIRTY-EIGHT
NUMBER THREE, 1944

A Press in Paradise

JOHN ELIOT ALDEN

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table:
A Bibliographical Study*

THOMAS FRANKLIN CURRIER

A Chapter in the Shelley Legend

ROBERT METCALF SMITH

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Of *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* published quarterly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1944.

STATE OF New York }
COUNTY OF New York } ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared *Nelson W. McCombs*, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor of *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 19th day of September, 1944.

(Signed) EARL L. WASHBURN.

[SEAL.]

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This number completes Volume 38 (1944).

The final signature is the Title-page and Content for the volume.

Volume 38 is complete in three numbers: First Quarter (March); Number Two (double number, June, published 1 November); Number Three (December).

Binder: Do NOT TRIM FORE-EDGE, on account of the map plates.

